A VINDICATION OF CHURCHES, COMMONLY CALLED INDEPENDENT: OR A BRIEFE ANSVVER to two Books; the one, intituled, *Twelve considerable serious Questions, touching* CHURCH-GOVERNMENT: The other, *INDEPENDENCY* examined, unmasked, refuted, &c. Both lately published by WILLIAM PRINNE, of LINCOLNES-Inne, Esquire.

By HENRY BURTON, a Brother of his, and late Companion in Tribulation.

MAT. 10. 34, 35, 36.

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law: And a mans foes shall be they of his owne household.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himselfe, and take up his crosse daily, and follow me. Luk. 9. 23.

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To Mr. WILLIAM PRINNE, &c.

MY deare Brother, and late *companion in tribulation*, you propound your *twelve Questions to all sober minded Christians, cordially affecting a speedy setled Reformation, and brotherly Christian union in all the Churches*, (as you write in Front) and my selfe being one of these, (and no other you shall find me) doe with the right hand take your Propositions as made to me among the rest; craving your leave to returne you a brotherly Answer. And brotherly in nothing more, then by a candid and Christian dealing with you all along, and that also in a matter of such high moment, as concernes the *kingdome* and glory of Jesus Christ. The zeale whereof is that alone, which puts me upon this task; it being otherwise far beyond my thoughts, that you and I, having been fellow-sufferers, and *spectacles to the world*, upon that tragicall stage of Antichristian tyranny, should ever come upon the

Theatre as Antagoniſts, one againſt the other, about the Kingdome of Jeſus Chriſt. But ſurely as an Antagoniſt againſt you I come not, but in the bowells of a brother. And had not the Book had your name in the Front, my ſtomack had not ſtooped ſo low, as to take it up or downe. But becauſe moſt men are apt to take all upon truſt, where they find Mr. *Prinnes* name engaged: and the Cauſe being ſo precious, as it hath by right taken up my whole heart, to become an Advocate to plead the excellency of it: I could not, though the meaneſt of all, but for the love of Chriſt conſtraining me, and by his grace aſſiſting, undertake this taske. Otherwiſe unwilling *in hoc ulcere eſſe unguis*, as the Roman Orator ſaid in another caſe. And this Anſwer was brought to the birth ſoone after yours: but it wanted a Midwife, whereof you have plenty. And I have had many interruptions. Nor am I ſo quick of foot, as you. But I may ſay, as *Ierome* once to young *Auguſtin*; *Bos laſſus fortiùs figit pedem*. And ſo in the ſpirit of love I come to your Booke.

A VINDICATION OF CHURCHES, COMMONLY CALLED *INDEPENDENT.*

YOu are for a *speedy accompliſhment of a Reformation.* And ſo am I, and ſo our late *Covenant* taken, binds every man to begin with himſelfe, and thoſe under him, and each to prevent other in the worke. But yet this is ſooner ſaid then done. For * *ſhall a Nation be borne at once?* Shall a corrupt, prophane, polluted Land, not yet waſhed from her old ſuperſtitions, not yet wained from the Ægyptian fleſhpots, not yet wrought off from the ſpirit of bondage, become all on a ſudden a Reformed Nation? But yet *Optandum eſt ut fiat, conandum eſt ut fiat,* (to uſe *Auguſtins* words of the Converſion of the *Jewes*) *It were to be wiſhed, and ſhould be indevoured.* But as *Rome was not built in one day*, nor the myſtery of iniquitie perfected in one day: ſo neither can *Rome* be ſo eaſily pulled downe in one day: nor can *England* become a Mount *Sion* in one day; firſt the old rubbiſh will require ſome time to be removed out of your Church-walls, but how much longer time out of mens hearts, where they have been ſo long, ſo faſt incorporated? And you know, that the materialls of that typicall *Temple*, the timber, the ſtone, were all *hewed* firſt, and *ſquared*, before they came to make up the building. Therefore ſoft and faire. The People are generally ignorant of a right Reformation. A right Reformation is a ſetting up of Chriſts ſpirituall kingdome, firſt over the hearts and conſciences, and then over the ſeverall Churches. For this, the

Pag. 2.

* Eſa. 66. 8.

* Zach. 20. the * *Carpenters* and *Masons* must be set awork, godly and able Ministers must be sought out, and sought for of the Lord, to fit the crooked timber, and rugged stones, for the Spirituall Temple. For *England* is generally ignorant of the mysterie of Christs Kingdome; the *Prelates* usurped all, suppressed altogether this Spirituall kingdom; no Ministers durst so much as mutter a word of it. Who durst say, that mens Consciences are subject to none, but Christ? That Christ is the only Law-giver of his Church? That the Churches of Christ ought not to be burthened with any humane ordinances in Gods Worship? That all humane rites and ceremonies invented by men, and imposed on men in Gods
* Col. 2. 23. service, are all a * will-worship, condemned by the Apostle? And the like. And yet wee deny not that every member in a Church is to be subject to the Officers thereof, holding out the Word, for conscience sake, *Hebr.* 13. 17. Now if the People have not heard of Christ thus a King, no, nor to this day in most Congregations of *England* do heare, or understand any thing of Christs kingly Office over Consciences and Churches, as whereupon a right reformation doth principally depend: how can such a Reformation be speedily set up, when the preaching up of Christs Kingdome is altogether silent, as if Ministers mouths were not yet freed from their old muzzle? Therefore, I conceive, if the better heed be not taken, there may be *more haste* to a *Reformation, then good speed:* when among so many Congregations, so many thousands in *England,* very few would be found to have on the *Wedding garment.* A Reformation therefore, such as God requires, will necessarily require longer time yet, that we may not go blind-fold about it.

You tell us, that *importunity of some reverend friends hath drawn from you your digested subitane apprehensions of these distracting Controversies.* Who those reverend friends are, it matters not. But had I been accounted worthy to be reckoned among those *reverend friends,* to have been made acquainted with such a purpose, I should have used all *importunity,* seasoned with strong reasons, to have dissuaded you from those *subitane apprehensions.* And seeing I come to know them, though somewhat too late, in that they cannot be recalled; admit your self were *Aristotle,* and your friend *Plato,* yet I will say, *Amicus Aristoteles, Amicus*

Plato,

Plato, sed magis amica veritas. And therefore I must be plaine with you, otherwise I should neither love you, nor your friend, nor yet the truth it selfe. To be plaine therefore, though I know you to be a very *Helua librorum*, of vast & indefatigable reading, and to have a stomack proportionable, of a strong *digestion*: yet give me leave to tell you, as my loving and beloved friend and brother, that the subject you here deale with, is not of so easie a *digestion*, as that *subitane*, or sudden *apprehensions* thereof may be well said to be *digested*. Strong meats, you know, taken downe liberally into the stomack, doe require the longer time for a kindly *digestion*. And a *sudden digestion* is apt to leave many indigested crudities, ingendring malignant humours in the body.

You *digest* your *apprehensions* into *considerable Questions*, (as you call them) to be *solemnly debated by sober minds*: but passing along (brother) I find your *Questions* turned into your owne resolutions, so as in stead of *debating* them by *sober minded men*, you forestall them, and tell us, that these *Independents*, (as you style them) *are guilty of Arrogancy, Schisme, Contumacy, and liable to such penalties, as are due to these offences, in case they shall not submit to such a publick Church-Government, Rites, Discipline*, as a Synod and Parliament *shall conceive most consonant to Gods Word, &c.* And all along, your *Queries* are so *digested* by you, as that they cast up a very ill sent, if not rather a judiciall sentence against those Churches, which not *honoris causa* you name *Independents*. But we shall answer to the particulars, as they come in order. Thus much of your Proeme, or Preface. Pag. 3. Qu. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

To your first Question.

Before I punctually answer this, and so the rest of your Questions, let me premise this, as an *axioma*, which I must demand of you as due to my Profession: that forasmuch as you are a learned Lawyer, and able to speake much of Lawes, and Customes of Nations, and Churches, and my selfe am a professor of Divinitie, the Rules and Principles whereof, are all of them laid downe in the Scripture, unto which alone all Questions about Faith and Religion are so reducible, and finally determinable,

ble, as who ſo denieth this, denieth the faith, and is not to be *diſputed* with, as a *denier of Principles*: therefore I require of you, as a Chriſtian brother, to joyne iſſue with me in this point, that all your Queſtions may be reſolved by cleare Scriptures, and reaſon, evidently deduced from them; and this with all brevitie and perſpicuitie.

* *Contra negantem principia non eſt diſputandum.*

Now to your firſt queſtion, the ſumme whereof is, *Whether every ſeverall Nation, Republick, and Nationall Church, hath not under the Goſpell a* liberty and Latitude left them to chuſe and ſettle ſuch an orderly forme of Church-government, Diſcipline, and Eccleſiaſticall Rites, as is moſt ſuteable to their particular Civill government, lawes, manners, cuſtomes, being not repugnant to the word of God. This being (as I conceive) a generally received truth among all Proteſtant Churches. And whether ſome things in all Church-governments, Diſcipline, Ceremonies whatſoever, are not, and muſt not be left to humane prudence, for which there is no direct precept nor pattern in ſacred writ? Which truth is aſſented to by all parties, Churches, whatſoever, in theory or practice.* This is the ſubſtance of your firſt *Queſtion.*

* 1 Cor. 14. 40. & 11. 34.

To which I anſwer: And firſt to your quotation of the Harmony, I will anſwer one for all. Sect. 16. Auguſt. Confeſſio 4. Traditiones deferiis, &c. *We condemne not* Traditions of *Holydayes, of the Lords day, of the Nativity, of Eaſter, and the reſt, for a politick end.* Here, you ſee, they put the *obſervation of the Lords day*, among *humane Traditions*, which I ſuppoſe you doe not approve. Again, they allow onely ſuch obſervations, as God *by the Morall Law, and the voyce of Nature it ſelfe commandeth.* And thirdly, *That humane rites be not impoſed*, Ne conſcientiæ onerentur, *That mens conſciences bee not burthened.* And in a word: To ſhape Religion in point of *Church-government, Diſcipline, Ceremonies, to every Nation, Republick, Nationall Church, and to Civill Government, Lawes, Manners, Cuſtomes, and ſo to humane Prudence*, (as you ſay) what is it but to *ſhape a coat for the Moone?* Whereas the Scripture holds forth unto us, but onely one forme of *Church-government, and Diſcipline*, which ought not to be altered according to the diverſitie of *humane Lawes and Cuſtomes in all Kingdomes and Common-weales*, as you affirme. And whereas you make a proviſo, *Alwayes provided, every thing bee conſonant, and*

Harm. of Confeſſions, ſect. 10 11, 26.

Ibid. Obſervationes breviſſimæ in totam Harmoniam. ſect. 19. Append. ſect. 10.

and no way repugnant to the word of God: To what purpoſe is this, when the very liberty you give of altering *Church-government and Diſcipline* as may be *ſutable to humane Laws and Cuſtomes*, is it ſelf repugnant, and no way conſonant to the word of God; as we ſhall ſhew by and by. This is *transformare Eccleſiam in humanam politiam, to tranſforme the Church into a humane Politie.* *Hæ imaginationes omnibus ætatibus inde uſq; ab initio mundi nocuerunt Eccleſiæ, & ſemper nocebunt, *Theſe imaginations, or fancies, have in all ages from the beginning of the world hurt the Church, and will alwayes hurt.* Thus the Harmony *.

* *Vide Appendices locorum, &c. ibid.*

* *Ibid.*

Now, brother, whereas you ſeem to challenge us *infallibly to evidence* by any *Goſpel Text*, that *Chriſt hath peremptorily preſcribed one and the ſelf-ſame forme of Eccleſiaſticall government, Diſcipline, Rites, to all Nations, Churches, in all particulars, from which they may in no caſe vary, under pain of mortall ſin, ſchiſme, or being no true Churches of Chriſt, with whom good Chriſtians may not ſafely communicate:* Firſt, what evidence from Scripture can you bring, why it ſhould not neceſſarily be ſo? You would ſeeme to make this a ground why *Church-government, Diſcipline, Rites*, ſhould be *alterable according to the ſeverall laws and cuſtomes of ſeverall Nations:* Becauſe (ſay you) *Chriſt enjoyned the preaching of the Goſpel to all Nations and People whatſoever, who have their ſeverall eſtabliſhed different formes of Civill government, Laws, Manners, Rules and Cuſtomes, ſutable to their reſpective diſpoſitions, Climes, Republicks.* By this reaſon you might argue, that therefore the Goſpel it ſelf may be preached variouſly, according to the variation of the climate *: and if not ſo, then (ſay I) neither is the *Church-government and Diſcipline to be varied according to the diverſity of Nations, Laws, Cuſtomes, Climates.* For, brother, the Church-government and Diſcipline now in the time of the Goſpel, is a part of the Goſpel, as being the Goſpel-government, and Diſcipline of the Evangelicall Churches. And, brother why ſhould you think that Chriſt now under the Goſpel, or New Teſtament, hath left a greater *liberty* to men to alter that form of *Church-government and Diſcipline*, which in the *New Teſtament* is laid down, then he did in the Old Teſtament under the Levitticall Law? What a ſtrict charge did this Law-maker give to *Moſes? See* (ſaith he) *that thou do all things according to the patterne*

* See alſo the cloſe of Gualter. Homil. in the Acts.

Not but that we grant a variety in the method and manner in point of circumſtance, ſo the ſubſtance be kept, & repentance from dead works, & faith towards our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt: So in Church-government.

Exod 25.40. Heb. 8.5.

* But we do not say that the same things are prescribed under the Gospel, nor doth it come to such circumstantials: but we say, what it prescribeth, it to be kept.

shewed thee in the Mount. He must not vary one pin*. But some will say, When the Tribes of Israel were reduced under a kingly government, as in *Davids* time, the service of God was in greater state and externall pomp, when the Temple was built, then it was before in the Tabernacle; whereby it may appear, that there was a liberty left to *David* to alter the form of worship so, as was sutable to the Regall state. But I answer, Here was no liberty left to man to alter any thing in the worship of God, or in the *Church-government*. For God was so exact in this, that he would not leave it to *David* himself, though both a King and a Prophet, and a man after Gods own heart, to set up what worship he pleased in the Temple, but God gave him an exact patterne of all, and that not onely by his Spirit, but in writing, that he might neither adde nor omit in the least tittle, 1 *Chron.* 28. And you know it was never left to the Kings of Judah, to do the least thing in point of Reformation, but onely to see, that the Priests do all strictly, (not any thing as seemed good to them, but all) according to the precise rule of the Law, 2 *Chron.* 31. Now was the great Law-giver so strict under the old Testament, and is he grown more remisse under the New? In *Ezekiels* vision of the Temple, or Church in the time of the Gospel, *Ezek.* 43. 10, 11. wee reade of a patterne, form, fashion of everie particular thing of the House of God, which is his Church, exactly set down, and measured by Gods own speciall direction. Or are men more wise and more faithfull now then *David* was, that Christ should trust every Nation with such a liberty as this, to alter and diversifie *Church-government and Discipline*, so as might be most *agreeable* to this or that *Kingdoms, Common-weales, Countreys custome, commodity, conveniencie?* And as for your *Nationall Church* here mentioned, we shall take a just measure of it when we come to your ninth Question.

And whereas you quote in the Margine, 1 *Cor.* 14. 40. & 11. 34. on which you ground your liberty to form your Church-government & Discipline sutably to each particular Civill government: Alas, brother, these very Scriptures our Prelates abused to maintain their unlimited liberty of setting up their rites and ceremonies, as sutable to the Civil government; which absurdity

ſurdity I have fully refelled in my *Reply to Canterburies Relation*. Whereas the Apoſtle there exhorteth, *that all things be done decently and in order*, according to thoſe rules they had received of him: to which agreeth the other place alledged by you, *Other things will I ſet in order when I come*, as Titus 1. 5. He left *Titus in Crete, that he might ſet in order the things that remained*; but all according to the Apoſtles direction for *Church-government*, and choice of *Officers*. And we ſhould have a mad world of it, if civill States in ſeverall Countreys ſhould have liberty to frame Church-government and Diſcipline, as ſhould moſt ſute with their particular conditions. This liberty is that which both Eccleſiaſticall and Civill States uſurping, turned the ſpirituall Kingdom of Chriſt over Conſciences and Churches, into a temporal and ſecular Kingdom, or rather indeed an Anti-chriſtian Tyranny, or Hierarchy, ſo as by this means it came to paſſe, that the *ſecond Beaſt aſcending out of the earth*, to wit, the Pope, (*Revel.* 13. 11.) commands the *inhabitants of the earth to make an image*, that is, to ſet up a forme of Religion and *Church-government*, ſutable to the *Image of the firſt Beaſt*, to wit, the Imperiall State of Rome. And thus came to be erected the *Hierarchicall Church-government*, in all pomp and points ſutable with the Romane Monarchy. So dangerous is that libertie which brings ſuch bondage. According to that, *Licentia ſummum omnes deteriores*: this brings not *liberty*, but *licentiouſneſſe*.

Your ſecond Queſtion is: *Whether if any Kingdome or Nation ſhall by a Nationall Councell, Synod and Parliament, upon ſerious debate, elect ſuch a publick Church-government, Rites, Diſcipline, as they conceive to be moſt conſonant to Gods Word, to the Laws, Government under which they live, and manners of their people, and then ſettle them by a generall Law; all particular Churches, members of that Kingdome and Nation, be not therefore actually obliged in point of * conſcience and Chriſtianity, readily to ſubmit thereto, and no wayes to ſeek an exemption from it, under pain of being guilty of arrogancie, ſchiſme, contumacie, and liable to ſuch penalties as are due to theſe offences.*

* 1 Cor. 14. 32, 33. Rom. 13. 1, 2. 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14, 15. 1 Cor. 10. 32, 33.

I anſwer: That is, *Whether the Kingdome and Nation of England, &c.* The ſumme is, you would here make way for a politicall State Church-government, or a mixt Church-government,

partly, *according to Gods word*; and partly *to the Laws and government under which we live*; and partly, *to the manners of the people*. Humano capiti cervicem jungere equinam. *Or*, populo ut placerent, &c. Truly, brother, your very queſtion is hereticall, you muſt pardon the expreſſion, which otherwiſe would not come home to the full truth. And your word *Elect*, imports no leſſe. For *Elect* taken in that ſenſe, as you here apply it, to ſet up a form of *Religion, of Church-government, and Diſcipline, with Rites and ceremonies ſuitable to the Laws and cuſtomes of a State, and manners of the people*: and, *AS MEN CONCEIVE*, is of the ſame ſignification with αἱρεσις, which ſignifieth a taking up an hereſie upon humane *election*; or, as you ſay, *As they conceive*. For you ſay not, *Such a Church-government, &c. as is moſt conſonant to Gods word*: but *ſuch as they conceive to be moſt conſonant*. So as you hang your *Church-government* upon mens *conceit*, or opinion of *conſonancy* with *Gods word*, and not upon a reall and eſſentiall *conſonancy*. Juſt like the Prelate of Canterbury, who in his *Relation* hangs the credit of the Scripture upon the Author, and *the opinion we have* (ſaith he) *of his ſufficiency*. Which I have noted in my Reply. But thus you open a wide ſluce, to let in an ocean of inundation of all ſorts of Religion into all parts of the vvorld, vvhen every Religion ſhall be meaſured by the line of mans conception, what men *CONCEIVE agreeable to Gods word*. Thus might *Henry* 4. the late French King (to make his way the eaſier to the Crown through ſo many difficulties) apoſtatize from the Proteſtant Religion, and turn to Popery, as *conceiving* it *ſuitable to the word of God*, to comply with the State of France, and the manners of the people, for the eſtabliſhing of his kingdome (as he *conceived*, though he was deceived) by becoming himſelf a Popiſh King. And ſo *Jeroboam* with his Counſell might *CONCEIVE* it agreeable enough *to Gods word*, to ſet up his *Calves* moſt *ſuitable* to the new *laws* and *cuſtomes* of that *State*, and to the *manners of the people*, who are apt enough to embrace idolatry and ſuperſtition, as *Ephraim willingly walked after the commandment*, *Hoſ.* 5. 11. And ſo in the reſt. Now that is an hereſie which is an error *conceived* and maintained againſt the word of God. That the maintaining of ſuch a liberty as you aſſume here, is ſo, we have in part ſhewed already from the Scripture,

ture, whence you are not able to bring the least shadow of reason to maintain it. Nay, we need go no further for the disfranchising of this your liberty, but your own words. Your words are *assistata*, they cannot cohere in any true Theologicall sense. For first, we ought not to assume, or pretend a liberty, as left us of God, when we want our evidence, and are not able to produce our Charter out of the Magna Charta, the Scripture. And this, brother, not you, nor any man can do. Again, nothing is more presumptuous, then to attempt to mingle heaven & earth together, that is, to mingle Christs Kingdom with the kingdoms of the world, or to these to frame and fashion that, which what is it else, but to set up a Babylonish *Church-government*. Did the Apostles thus? Did they frame Christs Kingdom & *Church-government* to the *laws* and *customes* of the *Romane Empire*? Or did they vary their orders for Church-government & Discipline, according *to the different manners and customes of those Nations, countreys or Provinces* where they planted their Churches? Had they one order for the Church of Corinth, and another for the Churches of Galatia, and a third for the Churches of Asia and the rest? No: But * *so ordain I in all Churches*, saith the Apostle. 1 Cor. 7.17.
And * *concerning the collection for the Saints, as I have given order to* 1 Cor. 16.1.
the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. So also for making of Ministers and other Church-officers, Act. 1. & 14.23.

Again, Your *Church-government* must be *conceived* to be *consonant to Gods Word*, yet with this restriction or limitation, that it be also *consonant to the Laws and Government under which we live*. You speak indeed like a pure Lawyer, & one that will stand for your Profession, were this the way to uphold it. But cannot your Law, and our Gospel cotton together, unlesse the Gospel weare the Laws livery, like to your Serjeants gown, made up of two severall colours; or unlesse Law and Gospel be woven together into a linsey woolsey garment? But what if your Law present, stand still in force for *Church-government*, without being repealed? Must the *Gospel* be brought again under your Prelaticall *Church-government*? Or rather why should not a *generall law* (to use your words) be enacted, to inhibite all formes of *Church-government and Discipline*, which are not every way *consonant to Gods Word*, without this addition, *And to the Lawes and Government under which we live*? For certainely, if the *Lawes and*

Government of the State under which we live, be good and just, there is no need why you should put upon Christs kingly *Government* in his Church, such hard conditions, as not to be admitted, but so farre as it is consonant to mans Laws. As *Tertullian* said, when upon the Emperour *Tiberius* his motion to the Romane Senate, that Christ might be admitted and enrowled among *Romes* gods, and the Senate refused, because they had made a Law, that none should be chosen for a god, unlesse first propounded by the Senate: *Ergo nisi homini placuerit, Deus non erit Deus*; *Therefore if it please not man, God shall not be God.* So let it be lawfull for me to say; *If it please not man, not the Senate, Christ shall not be King, his kingdome shall have no place in this or that Nation.* As if the good Laws of a civill State, and the good Laws of Christs kingdome, could not, ought not to stand together in their distinct forms unmixed; when certainly a State stands strongest, while most consonant to Gods Word, and to the *Church-government and Discipline* of Christ, and not when Christs kingdome and Government is made *suitable to the Laws and customes of the State.*

Famous was that Answer of *Eleutherius*, Bishop of *Rome*, to *Lucius* King of *Britaine*, when this Countrey of *Britaine* first received the faith (being the first Province that received it) where the Gospel began freely to be preached, without impeachment or inhibition of the Prince (as the * Story saith) and that without any ceremonies at all. King *Lucius* sending to *Eleutherius* for some modell, or form of Church-Government and Discipline: he received this Answer; *That Christ had left sufficient Order in the Scripture for the Government of the Church; and not onely for that, but also for the regiment of his whole Realme, if he would submit himself to follow that Rule. You require of us* (saith he) *the Romane Ordinances, with the Imperiall Statutes also to be sent unto you, which you desire to practise: The Romane Lawes we may find to be faulty, but Gods Laws never. You have received of late through Gods mercy, in the Realme of* Britaine, *the law and faith of Christ; you have with you both volumes of the Scriptures: Out of them therefore by Gods grace, and the counsell of your Realm, take you a law, and by that law through Gods sufferance rule your kingdome.* Now this *Eleutherius* being the 14th Bishop of *Rome*, by *Platina's* account, it shews unto us

* *Hollinshed*, Description of Britaine, Chap. 7. About the yeer 187.

the

the great difference between that, and after-times, wherein the Mystery of Iniquity grew up to its height, in assuming such an unlimited liberty to set up such a Church-Government, and ceremonies of humane invention, as were haled in by the head and shoulders. But brother *Prime*, you see here, how in those purer primitive times, even the Bishop of *Rome* himselfe was so farre from admitting a Church-Government surable to the severall lawes and customes of every Nation, (as you would have it) as he tels King *Lucius*, he hath both the Testaments, by the rule whereof he should not onely see the Church to be governed, but his own Realme also. *Ergo*, the Kingly government of Christ in his Church is not to be fashioned and moulded according to the lawes and customes of temporall and civill States, but contrarily the lawes of Civill States are to be reduced to the rule of Gods Word.

But you adde also, *And manners of their people*: that is, in their severall Countries, and Common-weales. Surely this reflects mine eye upon that Reformation begun in King *Edwards* reigne. But now what *Church-Government* and *Discipline* was to be set up? Why, *the manners of the people* must be the line and plummet to regulate this building by. The *people* of England had beene so long rooted in a superstitious Egyptian soyle: but because fat, and filling their flesh-pots with Onions and Garlick, they could the better brook the burthens which their Taskmasters the Prelates inured their shoulders withall. And withall they must have their Masse-Service, though translated out of the Roman into the English language. This in King *Edward* his letter to the Cornishmen, standing up for their Masse-book, stilled the babes when they understood the English Service-booke was no other then the Romish Masse clad in an English weed, though since it hath put off many of those ragges, but not all it should. So much it importeth, to have an eye to the *peoples manners*, and how they stand affected. When the Lord *Cromwell* had set forth the *Primmer*, or *Psalter*, without the *Letany*, all the Popishly affected, which were not a few, could not be quiet till they had cried up the *Letany* again into its old place. So as in fine, through the love of superstition in the people, and the love of the world in the Prelats (*alias* the Reformers, many of whom afterwards

Fox his Monuments.

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wards God reformed and purged in the flames of Martyrdome) ſuch a Reformation was ſet up, as for Church-government and Diſcipline (onely tranſlating the Popes headſhip, and ſetting it upon the Kings ſhoulders) was the very ſame with that which was in *Henry* 8. his dayes, and is at this day in Rome; and did ſo well ſute with the *Civill Government* and *manners of the people*, that a *Generall Law* was enacted for the ratifying of that *Prelaticall Government and Diſcipline*, which hath bred ſuch *manners in the people* generally to this day, as if another *Reformation* ſhall be ſet up, wherein the *peoples manners* ſhall be no leſſe looked upon, then in the former (as you here doe more then ſeeme to plead for) I can conjecture, if not certainly divine, what a *Reformation* both for *Church-Government and Diſcipline*, your *Church of England* is like to have. For if you aske the Prelaticall party, conſiſting of multitudes of their Prieſts, and of their ignorant and prophane people, together with all the Kings Army, they will all with one voyce and vote, roare it out at the Canons mouth, We will have the Biſhops Church-government and Diſcipline continued without alteration. If ye aske the ordinary Proteſtant profeſſors at large, they cry, No, no; not that; but we will have ſuch a Church-government, as under which we may injoy no leſſe libertie for our *manners*, then we had under the Prelates.

But you referre us to the *ſerious debate of a Nationall Counſell, Synod, Parliament*. But yet give us leave to put a vaſt difference between all theſe, and the Scripture, Chriſts owne voyce. If they truely informe us of the minde of Chriſt in the Scripture, we will bleſſe God for it: but yet if we can find out the mind of Chriſt by his immediate voyce, we dare not ſuſpend our beliefe and practiſe of it, until we have it at the ſecond hand from men. And ſhould we waite never ſo long upon the iſſue of their debate, commended unto us to be ſuch as men *conceive* to be agreeable and *conſonant to Gods Word*: yet for as much as we dare not * pinne our ſoules upon mens ſleeves, as not knowing (as one ſaid) whither they might poſſibly carry them: therefore we muſt examine all mens determinations in matters of Religion by *ſearching the Scriptures, and laying every thing to this line and rule. For the *Bereans* are commended, as the more noble, in that they examined diligently and daily, even the Apoſtles

*Lambdens Remains.

*Act. 17. 11.

doctrine

doctrine by the Scriptures: and much more are wee to try the ſpirits of men, that are not Apoſtles, and ſo not immediately inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt with infallibility of truth, as never any Generall Councell after the Apoſtles hath been. So as you know how miſerably and ſhamefully Generall Councels have erred. The firſt Councell of *Nice*, conſiſting of 318. Biſhops, how did they all agree to bring in a Doctrine of Devills, prohibiting Prieſts marriage, had not one Confeſſor, *Paphnutius*, by evidence of Scripture, and reaſon, cryed it downe, and ſo ſwayed the whole Councell? And you know very well, that Generall Councels, as well as Nationall, have not infallibilitie of judgement in all things. And it cannot be unknowne to you, that even this Aſſembly of Divines are of different judgements about Church-governement and Diſciplines, nor have they perhaps had ſo much time ſince their being under the Prelacy, as to be throughly informed of the way of Churches, commonly called *Independent*, but that many of them may poſſibly gaine much more knowledge of it, by ſpending ſome more time and ſtudy in it.

But Sir, beſides all this, you ſeeme to lead them ſuch a way, (ſhould they follow you) as would neceſſarily bring them into an inevitable and inextricable errour, in caſe they ſhould *elect* ſuch a *publick Church-government, Rites, Diſcipline, as they conceive to be moſt conſonant to Gods Word, to the Lawes, Government under which we live, and manner of the people.* For if they looke upon the manner of the people, which they muſt needs finde to bee for the moſt part very looſe (to ſpeake nothing of Ignorants and Popiſh Malignants) ſome men might *conceive*, that ſuch a *Church-government and Diſcipline* were moſt *ſuitable*, as doth moſt comply with, and give ſome indulgence to ſuch manners, as cannot eaſily be brought to enter in at the *ſtraite gate*, and *narrow way*, that *leads* into Chriſts kingdome. And whatſoever *Church-government* and *Diſcipline* comes not full home in all things to the word of God, is not that which is conſonant thereunto, and ſo not pleaſing unto God; and the more *conſonant it is to Gods Word*, the more *ſtrict* and holy it will be found to be, and ſo the leſſe *conſonant* to the common prophane *manners* of this Nation at this day. Worthy of our obſervation is that of the Lord to the Prophet *Jeremy*, Jere. 15. 19. *If thou take forth the pretions from*

the vile, thou ſhalt be as my mouth; let them returne unto thee, but returne not thou unto them. Whereupon the moſt learned Interpreter (as the learned *Beza* conſtantly ſtyles him) *Calvin*, among many other excellent obſervations on this place, thus concludeth; *Summa eſt, veritatem Dei non debere flecti ad hominum arbitrium, qua Deus non mutatur, ita nec verbum ejus ullam varietatem admittit:* The ſumme is; That the truth of God ought not to bee bended according to mans will or conceit, becauſe God is not mutable, ſo neither doth his Word admit of any change. Now the forme of Church-governement and Diſcipline laid downe in the New Teſtament, is a Doctrine of Chriſt, and no more alterable according to the varieties of mens cuſtomes and manners in all nations and ages, then the Goſpel it ſelfe is; which the Apoſtle would not have to bee altered into another Goſpel; though another Goſpel cannot bee; as neither another kingdome of Chriſt, another Church-governement, another Church-diſcipline ought not to be, but that alone which we find in Gods Word, which muſt not bee reduced or conformed (as a noſe of waxe, to which the Papiſts, as *Hoſius*, and *Pighius* doe compare the Scripture) to the faſhions of worldly governments, (*Rom.* 12. 2.) and popular *manners*, but theſe muſt be conformed to the Scripture.

Hence it may appeare, how rough your concluſion of this Queſtion is, if to ſuch a generall law, as you propoſe, all particular Churches, members of this Kingdome and Nation, ſhould not yeeld to be actually obliged in point of *conſcience, and Chriſtianitie, and readily to ſubmit thereunto, and no waies to ſeeke an exemption from it, under paine of being guiltie of arrogancy, ſchiſme, contumacy, and lyable to ſuch penalties, as are due to theſe offences.* Good Brother, be not ſo legall. What if that *reſolution* of an *Aſſembly*, and that *Generall Law* for the confirmation of it, be ſuch, as the conſcience of godly people cannot without ſinne ſubmit thereunto? Muſt they either violate their conſciences, or bee undone by your unavodable intolerable penalties, as both to ſuffer in their good names for *Arrogant, contumatious, Schiſmaticks*, yea and in their *Conſciences too* under the *guilt of theſe*, and to bee liable to I wot not what penalties beſides? and no waies to *ſeeke an exemption* from it? Why, good Brother, if we ſhould goe

and

and live under the Turkiſh Government, and could not in conſcience turne Turkes in the Religion there by Law eſtabliſhed, yet there is a way to ſeeke an *Exemption* from it, namely, by becomming Tributary to that State, as many Chriſtians doe.

Good Brother let's not have any of *Dracoes* Lawes executed upon Innocents. And remember how not long agoe the Prelates ſerved us; we could not have the benefit of Law, of Appeale, no exemption from bloud-letting, and eare-cropping, and pillorying, &c. And ſhall wee now turne worſe perſecutors of the Saints, then the Prelates were? *Non ignara mali miſeris ſuccurrere diſco*, ſaith that heathen Princeſſe.

But in the margent you put ſome places of Scripture to prove this. But truly, when I well view the places, I find them not to anſwer to what you would ſeeme to prove by the Quotation. The firſt is, 1 *Cor.* 14. 32, 33. *For the Spirit of the Prophets is ſubiect to the Prophets.* And what of this? *Ergo*, the *Spirit* of all the *Prophets* in *England* muſt be *ſubiect to the Prophets in the Aſſembly upon paine of being guiltie of Arrogancy, Schiſme, Contumacy, and liable to ſuch penalties, as are due to theſe offences.* O brother *Pryme*, you muſt as well note, as quote the place. But let me note it for you. The Apoſtle there ſpeaks both to, and of the Church of *Corinth*, when aſſembled together in one place: that the Prophets ſhould obſerve order, and give place each to other in Prophecying; as the reaſon is rendered, and not of any ſuch Aſſembly of that ſublime and ſupreame Authoritie, or the onely Prophets, to whom all other Prophets where ſoever diſperſed muſt be ſubject. *Ver.* 33. *For God is not the Author of confuſion, but of peace, as in all Churches of the Saints.* Which place alſo is no leſſe wide from your purpoſe. What? Will there be no peace, but all confuſion, unleſſe all be ſubject to the Aſſembly upon ſuch paine, as before? The Apoſtle ſpeaks here of the Order to be obſerved in every Church, as in all the Churches of the Saints. The other places quoted by you, are no leſſe miſapplyed. Will they prove, trow you, blind obedience?

But come on brother, if you will needs put us upon ſuch hard exigents, as to give us no quarter, without preſent laying down our Armes and cauſe, and ſo captivating our conſciences to the Dictates and Decrees of men; If you will make

1 Sam. 11. 2. no covenant with us, but upon this one onely condition, that you might thrust out all our right eyes; and if there bee no other remedy, yet give us leave to capitulate with you about some terms of accomodation, that wee may not altogether betray our consciences and liberties, which our Redeemer Christ hath so dearly purchased for us. And the first and main is this: First, brother, make it cleare unto us, that an Assembly of men *learned, pious*, what you will, living in ages succeeding the Apostles, have, or ever had, infallibility of judgement, so as to say, (as Acts 15. 28.) *It pleased the holy Ghost and Us*, to make these Decrees, that so wee may without further scruple of conscience, submit and conforme thereunto. But (I say) you must give us very good assurance and evidence hereof, that they are infallibly guided by the holy Ghost, that when they shall say, *It pleased the holy Ghost and Us*, we may safely believe them. For when you can resolve us of their conclusions no further, then as they *conceive to bee consonant to the word of God*: Alas! Sir, you leave us in a Wood, or Maze, whence no extricating of our selves, without *Ariadnes* thread, Gods word, to set us where wee were before. For you knew what variety of conceits many men have, *Quot capita, tot sententiæ*. This is the first and main condition we stand upon; and truly it were sufficient alone. We might in a second rank (but not equall to the former) name a selfe-deniall, an humble spirit, &c. You know the story of the Monkes of Bangor comming before *Austin* the first Archbishop of Canterbury, whom they seeing to sit in his Pontificall Chaire, and not rising up, nor moving unto them, they left him as a man not sent of God: And so, if wee should behold men carrying themselves loftily over their brethren, who are not of their Counsell, we should be apt to suspect that Christs Spirit is not there, because there is not the spirit of humility, neither the Spirit of truth to be found. A Cardinall in the Conclave at *Viterbium*, after almost three yeares agitation about the election of a new Pope, (as many yeares as we have been about to set up a Reformation, and the foundation not yet laid) each Cardinall ambitiously aspiring to be the Pope, one of them rose up and said, *Domine, &c.* let us uncover the roose of this Chamber, seeing the holy Ghost cannot get in unto

us,

us through ſo many tiles. But this by the way. And ſo enough of this queſtion.

The third and fourth Queſtions.

Quæſt. 3. I come now to your third and fourth queſtion. But leſt my anſwers may prove too voluminous, and ſo faſtidious to every-day-newes Readers, I ſhall in the reſt contract my ſelfe. And this I muſt doe by truſſing up your queſtions within the liſt of a Syllogiſme, reſpectively. For (as I noted before) all your queſtions are rather concluſive then interrogatory, rather poſitive reſolutions, then unreſolved queſtions. The ſumme therefore of your third and fourth queſtions (for this dependeth on that) is reduced into this Syllogiſme:

Rroposition. That which hath ſufficient (if not beſt) warrant for it in the New Teſtament, the examples of the Primitive Church, &c. moſt prevents hereſies, ſchiſmes, injuſtice; is to be received as a true and undoubted Church-Government, and to be preferred before that, which hath no ſuch expreſſe warrant in Scripture, no patterne for it in the Primitive, or beſt reformed Churches, &c.

Aſſumption, which takes up the fourth queſtion. But the Presbyteriall forme of Church-government, if rightly ordered, hath ſufficient (if not beſt) warrant for it in the New Teſtament, &c. The Independent not ſo.

Concluſion. Therefore the former is to be preferred and received before the latter, without any long debate.

The Anſwer.

Both your Propoſitions are lame and interfeere one againſt the other. Sufficient (if not beſt) warrant, will not prove ſo ſufficient a warrant, as if there be found a better. And ſo your Argument, by croſſing ſhins with it ſelfe, falleth to ground. Again, your Presbyteriall government hath neither beſt, nor any *ſufficient warrant*, as wee judge, in the New Teſtament, no nor any warrant at all in Gods word. But the true forme of Church-government hath both ſufficient, and (without compariſon) *beſt* warrant in the Scripture. And in truth, whereas you oppoſe

presbyteriall and Independent (as you call it) one against the other; let me tell you, that that which you call Independent, is the onely true, originall, and primitive Presbyteriall. Which Presbytery is proper and peculiar to every particular Church of Christ; and is not a Presbytery collective of many Churches by way of jurisdiction one, or many over each, or of a Nationall Church, as you terme it. For neither of these can you finde ether in the New Testament, or in the Old. In the old we read of one Church, to wit, that of the Nation of the Jewes: But that whole Church was one intire congregation, Act. 7. 38. they had one Church-officer over all, it is called the Tabernacle of the congregation in the singuler; and they all assembled three times in the yeare at Jerusalem, in the Temple, where they offered Sacrifice, and not else where: So as the Church was a type of every particular Church of Christ under the New Testament, as being both one intire Church and absolute, subject to no other form of government, but only that of the only Lawgiver and Mediator Jesus Christ; and no pattern of any such Nationall Church as you would have. Every particular Church now, consisting of visible Saints, is under Christ, as the onely *Head, King, Governour, Law-giver* of it, and so is subject to no other jurisdiction then that of Christ, his Spirit, his Word. Were there none other particular Church in the world, then one, as that of *Abrahams* Family, should it not be a compleat Church, untill there were other Churches on whose jurisdiction it should depend; though for ordinary Families, they cannot have such a nnmber as is requisite to make up a ministeriall body, & so are bound to unite to others for this end. Wee hold communion and consociation of Churches for counsell in doubts, and comfort in distresse; but we deny any such combination of Churches, as whereby the true liberty of every particular Church is taken away. And this communion of Churches doth no lesse (if not more) prevent *Heresies, Schismes, Injustice*, then your Presbyteriall. Nor can you shew reason to the contrary. And yet would you have our Churches more perfect then those of the Apostles own planting and gathering, as to bee altogether exempted from *Heresies, Schismes, Injustice*? Did not the Apostle tell the Church of Corinth, *There must bee Heresies eve-*

1 Cor. 11.

among

among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest: And could thoſe Primitive Churches after the Apoſtles, preſerve themſelves from *Hereſies*? How ſoone did the whole world groane and wonder, that it was become an *Arian*? And this with-in the fourth Century after the birth of Chriſt, when the Churches were governed by the Biſhops and their Presbyteries. And how ſoone did the Kingdome of the Beaſt mount up to ſuch a height, as it overtopt all the Weſterne Churches, and brought them under his dominion?

And for our truly and properly Presbyterian Churches (your Independents) to which you deny expreſſe warrant in Scripture; the whole New Teſtament is both an expreſſe and ample witneſſe on our ſide. All thoſe particular Churches which the Apoſtles planted, were all of abſolute authority amongſt themſelves reſpectively, and equall one to the other. You can ſhew us no rule or example to the contrary. That in Act. 15. is a tranſcendent, and ſtands alone, not to be paralleld, and therefore very impertinently objected by many, before you, as wee ſhall have occaſion to ſhew afterwards.

And for pattern in the Primative Churches after the Apoſtles, we are not curious to ſeeke it in the corrupt current of ſucceeding ages, when we find it the pure fountaine. It appeares, ſay the *Centuriſts*; *Cent.* 1. *7. Tit. de conſociatione Eccleſ.* that the Government of Churches in the ſecond hundreth yeare, was almoſt popular, every Church had equall power of ordaining or caſting out, if neede were, thoſe Miniſters they had ordained, with other things very materiall in that whole Title, as alſo in the Title *de Synodis privatis*. And for the beſt reformed Churches, if in them we cannot finde that patterne ſo fully followed as the Scripture holds forth unto us, wee crave leave without prejudice, to take it as wee finde it in the Word, without the leaſt variation. And you may know, in the beginning of Proteſtant Reformation, could they ſo clearly ſee in the dawning, as wee may now in the meridian, if we will but open our eyes? The reformed Churches have taken up one or other of them upon the matter the maine things we contend for: 1. The Church of Holland receive none to the Table, nor have a vote as a member of that Church, but ſuch as firſt give ſatisfaction to the Elderſhip,

and

and then to the Congregation: and 2. have a forme of covenant propounded by them. Secondly, the French Churches exercise excommunication in their particular congregations, though with liberty of appeale. And this was the government of the Primitive Churches in the 2d hundreth yeare, as appeares, *Cent. 2. c. 7. Tit. de Synodis*: but especially, *Tit. de consociatione Eccles.* So as no long debate neede to be, if but Christs word alone may take place, without the necessary accommodation of humane *Lawes, Customes, Manners of the people*, as you doe plead.

And lastly for appeales in case of *Injustice*, you know, brother, that if injustice be done in any civill matter, if redresse may not be had by the mediation of the Church, whereof the parties are members, then the Law is open there to appeale for justice. And if it be about the Churches censure for some miscarriage of a member towards the Church, or any member thereof, if the censure bee unjust, the party grieved may desire to have his cause heard by some other Churches, who may accordingly deale with their Sister-church to require a brotherly account of the whole businesse, as is the duty of all the Churches in such cases. And if it be in matter of opinion, here the appeale lies principally and in the first place, to the Scripture, as the supreme Judge; and if the things be obscure, & too hard for that Church to resolve by the Scripture, then to call in the helpe of other Churches for their best information. And in summe, brother, there is no case can fall out in any Church, which hath not as many helpes by a free communion of Curches, wherein every Churches peculiar liberties and priviledges are preserved as they ought to be: as any you can name to bee in your obligatory combination of Churches, wherby the liberty of each Church is by cõmon consent sold over to others, by which it ceaseth now to be a free Church of Christ, under his onely jurisdiction and government. So as herby great mischiefes may redound even to the purest Church, when once things come to be carried by the vote of a generall or Classicall Assembly of Divines, swaying things besides the Rule, and stretching them beyond their line. And therefore famous was that saying of *Nazianzens*, * *That he never saw any good to come of generall Councels*; because commonly Camelion-like they change their hue with the neareſt obje&, complying with the condition

of

* See *also Nicolas de Clemangis, super materia Concilii generalis, circa initium. Non oportet nos Ecclesiæ triumphantis, Ecclesiæ titulos ascribere, ut infallibilis sit, &c.*

of the present times, and State: as suppose Prelaticall Spirits should turne to be your Presbyterians, or as when (in case the Lord Christ shall resume his Kingdome over his Churches in a civill State) we should perhaps see some of your Presbyterians as fast to turn Independants, were the preferments suitable.

But some may object, that one Church standing by it selfe, is more subject to fall into errour, then when combined with other Churches. *Obj.*

To which I answer; That every particular Church injoying its own freedome, without any injoyned combination with other Churches, may much longer preserve it selfe from danger of errour, when it hath its free choise in matters of difference or difficulty, to consult onely with those Churches, which it knows to be most sound and orthodox, then when it is fast bound, and incircled with this or that combination of Churches, being in number twelve or twenty, or more or lesse, whose votes must carry every controversie, according to the severall humours of such and such, at all adventure. And (brother *Prynne*) the world is not so plentifull of sound spirits, as to supply every Hundred in the Land with twelve or twenty able and godly Ministers to be of a combination. Nay, you may observe what poore shifts are used for the supplying of places with godly and able Ministers, which are grown so geason, that the City now is faine to be supplyed with plundered countrey Ministers, in stead of their out-cast Malignants: And suppose all these to be as good as they should be, where shall those country-places be supplyed? And besides, such is the penury of good Ministers (if not of care to provide better, if possible) that such as are for their demerits cast out of one place, are (for I wot not what merits) put upon some other people, where their good qualities are not knowne. Being such as verifie the Proverb, Οὐ τὸν τρόπον ἀλλὰ τὸν τόπον μεταλλάττουσι; *They change their mansion, but not their manners.* And besides all this, he is one very meanly gifted now adayes, that will be wooed and won to take a Benefice under a hundred or sixescore pounds. And brother, why should godly Ministers indeed be yoked with such earth-wormes, and Mammonists, as are in some Parishes, and as some of your Presbyterian combinations would necessitate us unto? If you say, if things goe amisse *Answ.*

in leſſer Claſſes, they may be remedied in a generall Aſſembly: then I ſay, there is the like reaſon of a generall Aſſembly, that there is of all the ſeverall claſſes put together. For, *totius & partium eadem eſt ratio*; if all the members be corrupt, ſo alſo muſt the whole body be. Therefore the caſe muſt needs be hard, when one or two Churches in a claſſis or combination, that are ſound, ſhould be bound to the deciſions of the reſt being unſound; and ſo for the generall Aſſembly in the like proportion.

The fifth Queſtion.

It is reduced thus;

Propoſition. That, whoſe grounds and reaſons tend inevitably to endanger, overthrow, and embroyle Eccleſiaſticall or civill formes of Government, ought not to be ſuffered.

Aſſumption. But ſuch is the Independent church-government: it tends inevitably, &c. Therefore it ought not to be ſuffered,

I deny the Aſſumption: The grounds and reaſons of true church-government, do not in their own nature tend to the indangering, overthrowing, and embroiling of Eccleſiaſticall or civill formes of Government (*Herm. confeſſ. ſect.* 11. of the confeſſ. of *Auſpurg. art.* 7.) Power Eccleſiaſticall no more hindreth the civill, then the skill of muſicke, neither is it to be confounded with civill. And *ibid.* They, to wit, the Prelates, transforme the church into a humane Government. For they would doe all in imitation of civill Government. But if they produce any ſuch effect, it is onely accidentall, and the maine cauſe is in ſuch Eccleſiaſticall or civill bodies, when they ſhew ſome antipathy in their conſtitution to Chriſts kingdome and government, by their oppoſing or oppreſſing of it. Hereupon
* Mat. 10. 34. Chriſt ſaith; * *Think not that I am come to ſend peace on the earth; I came not to ſend peace, but a ſword.* And it was the preaching of the Goſpel of the Kingdome, both by Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, for which they were exclaimed againſt, and perſecuted, as trou-
Luk. 23. 2. 14. Act. 24. 5. blers of the State, both Eccleſiaſtick and Politick, as *movers of ſedition*, and *perverters of the people*, and the like. And will you thereupon conclude, that the preaching of the Goſpel, and ſetting up of Chriſts kingdome in his churches, is a troubler of the

the State, and a *mover of ſedition*, and a *ſeducer of the people*, becauſe Hierarchicall Government hath an Antipathy with Chriſts Spirituall Kingdome, and Church-government?

The ſixth Queſtion.

The ſumme where of is:

That which from the beginning of the preaching of the Goſpel downwards, till this preſent age, had no being in the world, can doubtleſſe be no Church-Government of Chriſts, or his Apoſtles. *Propoſition.*

But ſuch (ſay you) is the Government of Independent Churches. *Aſſumption.*

Therefore not Chriſts; or the Apoſtles Church-government.

I deny your Aſſumption. And for further anſwer thereto, I referre you to my Anſwer to your third and fourth Queſtion, where is cleerely proved, that all the Churches, founded and planted by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, were in themſelves reſpectively abſolute and free Churches, which though they had communion with all their Siſter-Churches, yet you can never prove your claſſicall, or Synodicall Juriſdiction of either a Provinciall Church (as you call it) or a Generall Counſell over every particular Church, to have the leaſt footing, or being at all in the Scripture. 2. In the Eccleſiaſticall Hiſtories for the firſt 200. yeers we finde (as was noted above) ſufficient ground for it; but none for the combined coercive Presbytery; let that be ſhewn; afterwards indeed, as times grow worſe, you finde your *Patriarchall*, *Metropoliticall*, *Prelaticall*, *Nationall*, *Provinciall church-governments*, *Generall and Provinciall councels*, ſubordination and ſubjection of the leſſer Churches to the greater, by which very meanes the Papall Antichriſtian kingdome came gradually to be erected; (as is noted before) but can you ſhew us the leaſt print of one footſtep in the Word of God, of any ſuch Hierarchie, or of any ſuch ſubordination and ſubjection of one Church to another; And if the myſtery of iniquity began to worke even in the Apoſtles own times, which was the very Hierarchie it ſelfe, in the affection of Primacy; as we ſee practiſed by *Diotrepes*, who is noted to bee φιλοπρωτεύων, a lover of Pri-

macy, or preheminence, and that even above the Apoſtle *Iohn* himſelfe; with other like ſutable practiſes; This Miſtery growing up and ſpreading mightily by degrees, after the Apoſtles were dead, and ſo prevailing as a generall deluge over the face of the earth, as nothing could bee ſeene but Dioceſan Biſhops ſeas, overflowing every where: Therefore were there never ſuch Churches extant? But ſuppoſe there were no examples to be found of it in Church Story, which yet we have proved the contrary, nevertheleſſe, you know brother, when a mans evidences of lands are loſt, there be publicke Records, as the *Rowles of Chancerie*, where they may be found againe. And if there they be found, will you not allow them, becauſe the man cannot otherwiſe ſhew them? Now we have the ſacred Scripture, where our Evidences are ſafely recorded. Sutfice it then, that there we ſhew them. The contrary opinion doth manifeſtly eſtabliſh Traditions unwritten, as the Papiſts doe. And to give the Reader ſome intimation how the Churches of Chriſt came in time (and that in ſhort time after the Apoſtles) to loſe their liberties; I crave leave of you to note that paſſage in *Ambroſe* (who lived within the fourth Century) upon 1 *Tim.* 5. Synagoga, & poſtea Eccleſia, &c. *The Iewes Synagogue, and afterwards the Chriſtian Church had Elders, without whoſe counſell nothing was done in the Church. Which by what neglect it grew out of uſe, I know not, unleſſe it were perhaps the ſloath, or rather pride of the Teachers, whilſt, alone, they would ſeeme to be ſome body.* So *Ambroſe* the Biſhop of *Millan* confeſſed. I confeſſe I cannot ſhew many ſuch inſtances or records, as perhaps your ſelfe in your multifarious reading may obſerve: But this one, from ſuch a reverend and ancient author too, of pious memory, may ſerve inſtead of many; conſidering alſo that this is the greater rarity, and antiquity, and much to be wondred at, how it eſcaped the expurgatorie *Index*, by thoſe that were the firſt fathers of the Myſtery of Iniquity, that they did not quite expunge this record alſo, that not a pin of the old patterne ſhould remaine. Now that the Church this Ancient there ſpeaketh of, was particular Congregation, anſwerable to the Synagogue, governed by the Counſell of its own Elders, cannot be denyed. Whereby all men may, cleerly ſee, in how ſhort a time the Governement of Churches, inſtituted by Chriſt and his Apoſtles,

Synagoga, & poſtea Eccleſiæ ſeniores habuit, quorum ſine conſilio nihil agebatur in Eccleſia. Quod qua negligentia obſolevit ſcio, niſi Doctorum deſidia, aut magis ſuperbia, dum ſoli volunt aliquid videri.

Comment. Ambroſii in c. 5. Epiſt. 1 Tim. 1. 5.

Apostles, came to bee changed from being free Churches, to become servile and subject to the usurpation of the greater, the Prelates and their clergie now making up the Church, as if the congregations themselves were no Churches, as being stripped of all their Rights and Priviledges, yea and of Christ their King, his Kingdome now being turned into an Oligarcy; or, Oligarchill Tyranny, mixed of two of the worst forms of Government; though you seem to put Oligarchy in the ranke of the the best; but I suppose you would have said, instead of Oligarchy, (having named Monarchicall, and Aristocraticall) Democratie; Oligarchy being Heterogeneall to the other two. But enough of this.

The seventh Question.

Thus reduced. Those Churches, which do not conforme their Church-government to some one or other publike forme of Civill Government, dividing themselves into many Parochiall Churches, Dioceses, Provinces, but doe gather Churches not out of Infidels, but of men already converted to, and setled in the Christian faith, and do admit them into the Church by way of Covenant; no one example, or direct Scripture, Reason, or Authority can be produced, to satisfie conscience of the lawfulnesse of them. *Proposition.*

But such are the Independent Churches, they do not conforme, as afore; Therefore conscience cannot be satisfied of the lawfulnesse of them.

The Argument (or Question) contains many branches, scarce reducible to one head; but I have bundled them in one coard, as well as I could. And for answer; first this Question is coincident with all that went before, and so is already in that respect answered. Secondly, Your parallell betwixt the civill adociation and Ecclesiastick, is not grounded on Scripture; for neither God taught, neither the Churches practised any such necessarie union and dependance of one Church on another, though they might have done it, and had need of it, as being in times of persecution, (which hindered it not, no more then it doth in *France* now) *Assumption.*

2. You confidently affirm, that all Ecclesiasticall Histories testifie

to

ſo much, which is manifeſtly untrue, as hath been ſhewed before. 3. Though churches ſpringing out of other churches had dependence on them, what is this to churches that are far diſtant one from another, and never had ſuch a ground of relation one to another? Beſides the Harmonie of confeſſions, which you quote for you. (though I finde not that in thoſe places they ſay any thing to the point) yet Sect. 11. cap. of the *Keyes*, that the *Keyes* are committed to each particular, even the leaſt Eccleſiaſticall Society. Thirdly, Chriſts true churches here on earth, are not to be * limited to this or that place; as, becauſe there are ſo many Pariſhes, Dioceſes, Provinces, in a civill State, therfore thoſe muſt be ſo many fixed, Parochiall, Dioceſan, Provinciall churches. And here, Brother *Pryune*, would reduce (*tanquam ex poſtliminio*) the Provinciall, Dioceſan, Parochiall church-Government, to the ſame forme it had before? Would you have the Provinciall Archbiſhops, with their Dioceſan Biſhops, and Parochiall clergie, or Prieſts ſet up again? For a Prouince hath relation to its Provinciall, and a Dioceſe to its Dioceſan, and a Pariſh (to ſpeak in the old Dialect) to its Pariſh-Prieſt. *Da veniam verbo.* And as for diviſion of Provinces, Dioceſes, and Pariſhes, into ſo many churches, you know where and when it began. For in the yeer 267. *Dyoniſius* Biſhop of Rome made this diviſion: which diviſion turned the churches into a Babyloniſh confuſion; when now all that dwelt together in every Pariſh, and ſo in every Dioceſe, whoever they were, Tag, and Rag, muſt make up a church, as ſo many members do one body: whereas the churches planted by the Apoſtles, were called and gathered out of the wide world, where the Word of God came, and took place. So as not every citie became a church, but ſo many as were called in every citie. *Paul* writes not to all in *Corinth*, but to the church there, conſiſting of the Saints only.

* Iohn 4. Acts. 10. 35 Matth 28. 20.

Polydor Virgil de Inventoribus rerum. lib 4 cap 9.

1 Cor. 1 2. ſo Rom. 1. 7. ſo Epheſ. 1. 1, &c

But you object the gathering of churches, not of Infidels, but of men already converted to, and ſetled in the chriſtian faith, of which forme of congregating churches, you ſay you could never diſcern example, or any direct Scripture to ſatisfie conſciences. We would gladly ſay Amen to that aſſertion, that the whole Nation is chriſtian, eſtabliſhed in the faith; but if not, you diſpute *ex falſo ſuppoſito*. May it pleaſe you then, brother,

to

to take notice of the example both of *John Baptist* and of Christ himself, and of the Apostles, who * all of them did call and gather christian churches out of the Jewes church: which might suffice to satisfie any mans conscience in this point; and so much the more, when they consider this is a time of Reformation, and we have all taken a covenant each to go before other, in reforming not only our selves, but all others within our line, according to the word of God. And again, the case between our Reformation at this time, and that of the Jewes church, is much alike: For as th awas the Gospell-Reformation, so is this; as that was a gathering of such churches out of that of the Jewes, as acknowledged Christ to be their onely King and Law-giver, to govern consciences and churches by his Word, when the rest of that chutch, even the main body of it, did reject Christ, and renounce him for their King, this being the very Title set over him on his crosse, for which they crucified him: So the preaching up of Christs Kingdome in these dayes, is that which calleth and gathereth those unto Christ, who acknowledge him alone for their King to govern them; and this out of those, that doe not, or will not submit unto his Kingly government, but depend upon the sole determination of men, what kinde of church-governement they will set up in the Land, which you tell us must be *sutable to the lawes and customes of the Realme, and manners of the people.*

* Mat. 3. 5. 7. Joh. 4 1. Acts 2. 40.

But there is yet one thing more, for which you say, you can see no ground, and that is particular *church-government.* Why, brother, why should the lawfulnesse of this be doubted, whether explicit or implicit? It is the churches wisedome and care, yea, conscience and duty too, as we humbly conceive to admit of none but such as can give some account of the worke of grace wrought in them, though but in the least degree, yet in truth, so far as we may discern them to be Saints: for such onely are fit members of a church, or body of Christ, so as to partake of those holy Ordinances of Christ, which none but visible Saints ought to partake of. And who are fit to receive the Seales of the covenant, but such as professe to be in covenant? And surely if any shall refuse to make this profession of their being in covenant, as being ashamed thereof, with what conscience can the

church

Church admit them into fellowship? And you know this is a time of Reformation, and we have long been under a yoke of Antichristian-government, and of humane ordinances in the worship of God; wherein we have all violated our vow and covenant made in our names in our Baptisme. Now, doth not reason require, that we should renew our covenant in our own persons, when we come to enter into the way of Reformation, and that in as full a manner as possibly we can? And when the people of God came out of Babylon to inhabit Ierusalem again, they made a covenant among themselves, when seeking the *way with their faces thitherward, they say, Come and let us joyn our selves to the Lord in a perpetuall covenant that shall not bee forgotten.* The case is ours in a great measure, who are now inquiring *the way to Sion, with our faces thitherward*; and shall we be abashed to come to Sion from all the reliques of Babylon, and not incite one another, as they did, to enter into a perpetuall covenant with the Lord Christ, as our onely King not to be forgotten? And the like wee read *Ezra* 10. 5. and *Nehem.* 9. 38. so did King *Asa*, 2 *Chron.* 15. 12. Now if any require an example hereof in the New Testament, I answer, what needs it, when wee have it in the Old? What example have we in the New Testament for baptizing of Infants? Yet having a * commandement in the Old for circumcising the Infants of beleeving *Abraham*, as being included in the same covenant with faithfull *Abraham*, the intaile of this Covenant never yet cut off, but reaching to all *Abrahams* seed, walking in the steps of *Abrahams* faith now under the Gospel; infants of beleeving parents professing to be in covenant, have the same right unto baptisme, as being within the covenant, which the infants of beleeving *Abraham* had unto circumcision (in stead whereof baptisme by Gods institution succeeded) and this by a strict charge and command from God (*Gen.* 17. 13, 14.) which is as strong now for baptizing of Infants of beleeving parents, as it was to the infants of beleeving *Abraham* for circumcision. Again, what example, yea or precept is there of giving women the Lords Supper in the New Testament? yet upon good consequence it is drawn from thence. But this by the way. And to conclude this point, what reason can any man bring against this particular Church-covenant? And if any doe disrelish

Ierem. 50. 5.

Gen. 17. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

Rom. 4. 11, 16.

disrelish it, they are onely such as take a disgust of the way it selfe; and then no marvell if every thing about it be quarrelled and questioned, though no other reason can be given of it, but a *Nolumus*: such as the Jewes gave when they said of Christ, *Nolumus*: * *We will not have this man to reigne over us*. Which speech was the more notorious, as being delivered by an *Embassage*, a solemne act of State of the Eldership, and they his own Citizens, though a little after (vers. 27.) he declares them his enemies, and for this very thing, that they would not hee should reigne over them, commandeth them to be brought and slaine before him. But this by the way, though not unworthy of wise mens sad observation.

* Luke 19. 14. διὰ τὸ πρεσβείας.

Object. But it will be said, wee have covenanted already in the Nationall Covenant.

Answ. This is against things upon supposition, that we were convinced of the evill of them, but not about our own persons, as enquiring whether we indeed are willing to give up our selves to the Lord Iesus. 2. This was put in by such outward authority, that many for feare tooke it, which a Church-covenant under the Gospell (where the people are to be such as come willingly) will not beare; for under the Law indeed there was another order, but appointed by God, that they might be forced to the covenant that they had received in their fathers: but our fathers were over-awed, and secondly, no such order now.

The eighth Question.

This question, though somewhat involved and perplexed with many branches, yet the scope being to prove a Nationall Church, and so a common Presbyterian Classicall government, to which particular congregations, persons, ought to be subordinate, and thereby an apparent subversion of the Novell Independent invention. (These are your words.)

The whole I reduce into form thus:

" Where there bee infallible proofes of Nationall Churches, " there of necessity must be a common Presbyterian, Classicall " government, to which particular congregations, persons, ought " to be subordinate, to the apparent subversion of the *NOVEL* " *INDEPENDENT INVENTION*. *Proposition.*

Assumption. " But there be infallible prooſes of Nationall Churches; as the " Catholick Church, the Nationall Church of the Jewes, the Sy- " nodall Aſſembly of the Apoſtles, Acts 15. who made and ſent " binding decrees to the Churches; ſeconded with all Oecu- " menicall, Nationall, Provinciall Councels, Synods, and the " Church-government exerciſed throughout the world in all " Chriſtian Realmes, States, from their firſt reception of the " Goſpell, till this preſent; compared with twelve places of " Scripture at the leaſt, &c.

Concluſion. " Therefore there muſt be of neceſſity, a common Presbyterian " Claſſicall government, to which particular Congregations, per- " ſons, ought to be ſubordinate, to the apparent ſubverſion of the " *Novell Independent Inventions.*

Now for anſwer to this large Argument, briefly: And firſt, to the Propoſition. I deny that you can bring any infallible prooſes, or one proof, that there either are, or ever have been any Nationall Churches by any other inſtitution, but meerly humane; nor any one of divine inſtitution, but onely that of the Jewes in the old Teſtament, and now wholly diſſolved; of which we have ſpoken ſufficiently before: And which alſo was not onely Nationall, but in a manner Oecumenick and univerſall, as appeares Acts 2. and ſuch therefore as I hope you contend not for now; for then there would be a Pope, as there was an high Prieſt then &c. And brother, you muſt give us leave to ſtand upon this, as for our lives, that we dare not admit of any Churches, as the true and genuine Churches of Chriſt, which are not of his owne inſtitution, that is, ſuch as are not called and gathered by the voyce of Chriſt in his word, and by that Scepter of his ſwayed, and by that alone Law of his governed. And therefore be intreated, good brother, not to preſſe upon us ſuch your Churches, whoſe not onely inſtitution in their ſeverall diviſions, but government alſo in their combinations, is meerly humane, and therefore as a houſe founded on a ſand, which againſt a ſtorme cannot ſtand. You muſt firſt be able to found your Nationall Church in the Scripture, or aſſure your ſelfe, if a man will build upon it a common Presbyteriall Claſſicall government, and dwell there, he will bring an old houſe upon his head, when God ſhall begin to ſtorm it.

But

But to come to your perticular inſtances in the Aſſumption, for the prooſe of your Nationall Church. The firſt is, the Catholicke Church throughout the world. What is this to a Nationall Church? Though the Catholick include all the true Churches throughout the world, yet doth it not therefore conclude any Church to be Nationall.

The ſecond inſtance is, the Nationall Church of the Jewes, and from hence you can conclude as little for your Nationall Churches; as before we have ſhewed. For bring us any one Nationall, that is one intire Church, or congregation, as that of the Jewes was: or, that is of one family, as that was: or, that is a type of Chriſts ſpirituall Kingdome, as that was: or, that is the univerſall Church of God viſible on earth, as that was: or, that is governed by the like lawes, that that was: when your ſelfe doe confeſſe, that the government of your Nationall Churches is to be regulated by *humane Lawes, Cuſtomes, Manners*, and not by Gods word alone; whereas that of the Jewes was wholly governed by Gods own Law, and not at all by the Lawes of men, untill it came to be corrupted, contrary ro the expreſſe Law of God. And you confeſſe alſo, that the government of your Nationall Churches is alterable, according to the *Lawes, Cuſtomes, Manners of ſeverall Nations*: whereas the government of the Church of the Iewes was unalterable, till Chriſt himſelfe did put a period to that Oeconomy. In a word, your Nationall Churches are a mixed multitude, conſiſting for the greateſt part of prophane perſons, being as a confuſed lump, whereof there are nine parts of leaven to one of pure flowre, ſo as the whole is miſerably ſoured, and the flowre made altogether unſavoury: But that of the Iewes, in its naturall and externall conſtitution, was all holy, * *an holy Nation, a Royall Prieſthood, a peculiar People*, * all the congregation holy, every one of them: So as in no one particular, doe your Nationall Churches hold parallell with that of the Iewes, no not in the leaſt reſemblance. Exod. 19.5,6. Numb. 16.3.

Your third inſtance is the *Synodall Aſſembly of the Apoſtles, Elders, and Brethren at Jeruſalem*, Acts 15. who made and ſent *Binding Decrees*, to the Churches. And what of this, brother? Therefore Nationall Churches, or generall

Councels, or Provinciall, have the like power to make and impose binding Decrees, and send them to the Churches? Why, first of all, that Assembly was not any Nationall Church representative. Secondly, neither was it a Generall or Provinciall Councell. Thirdly, being an Assembly of the Apostles, with the Elders and Brethren, it could not erre: for the Apostles had *infallibility* of judgement, being guided by the holy Ghost infallibly, and the Elders and Brethren did assent to their determinations. And was there ever such a Synodicall Assembly since that? Had euer any Councell besides that, *infallibility* of judgement? Shew it, brother, and then wee will beleeve they may make *Binding Decrees*, and wee will submit unto them. Nay, dare any Assembly of men on earth, say, *It seemed good to the holy Ghost, and Us?* That's enough for the black mouth of blasphemy, the Roman lying Oracle. But in your second thoughts, you traverse this * place more largely, which wee shall consider when we come to it. In the mean time, what I have here and before said, may suffice to stay the Readers stomace.

* Act. 15.

But you adde, All this is seconded with all *Occumenicall, Nationall, Provinciall Councels, Synods, and the Church-government throughout the world in all Christian Realmes, States*, &c. Alas, brother, all these put together, are in no sort sutable to make a second to that Apostolicall Assembly; they cannot hold the least proportion with it, to make a second to that unsampled sample, though they make never so great a summe.

And whereas you make the up-shot of this your question, *to the apparent subversion of Novell Independant Invention*, (these be your words) we have proved it to be neither mans *Invention*, but Gods own institution, nor *Novell*, as having its foundation in the New Testament; nor yet *Independent*, otherwise then that it depends not upon any humane authority, or jurisdiction out of it self; not upon any such conformity to humane *lawes*, or *customes*, or *manners* of every Nation or people, as you speake of. Neither doe you take away our Argument from the most usuall phrase of the Apostles calling the Churches in the plurall, by saying, *Historians often speake of the Churches in England*: for they doe not so speak when they mean the congregations, but the material Temples; but speake of England as one Church when they un-

underſtand the people; and there hath not been ſhewen any dependence of thoſe Churches, as the dependency of the *Engliſh* Churches is knowne.

The ninth Queſtion.

Thus reduced in ſumme:

" That liberty which the Apoſtles had and uſed in ordaining, *Propoſition.*
" ſupplying, inſtituting new Rites, Orders, Canons, &c. for the
" Churches peace and welfare, they tranſmitted to poſteritie:
" But the Apoſtles had and uſed ſuch liberty &c. *Aſſumption.*
" Therefore the ſame liberty have all Churches in the world, *Concluſion.*
" in all ages ſucceeding the Apoſtles, in ordaining, ſupplying,
" inſtituting new Rites, Orders, Canons, for the Churches peace
" and welfare.

I anſwer to the Propoſition: 1. That *the Apoſtles themſelves had no other libertie* to doe any thing about the calling, planting, ordering, and regulating of Churches. but what they had immediately given them by Chriſt, and his Spirit. 2. This liberty ſo given them reached no further, then to thoſe things onely which were given them in charge, and which they accordingly, as faithfull Stewards, did practiſe concerning the Churches. Even as Chriſt himſelfe, being the *Son of God*, and *ſet over his houſe*, was *faithfull* in all things, doing nothing, but what he had by ſpeciall Commiſſion and Command from the Father. So as, if the *Son himſelfe, God bleſſed for ever*, took not the liberty to himſelf to doe what himſelfe pleaſed, as Mediator, though as the Sonne *he thought it no robbery to be equall with God* the Father; but did every thing as he had received commandment from him: how much leſſe have the ſervants of God any liberty to doe what pleaſeth them, but that, and thoſe things alone, which they have in command from their Maſter. If therefore they who profeſſe to ſucceed the Apoſtles in their ſeverall generations, will challenge the ſame liberty, which the Apoſtles had and uſed about the Churches of God, they muſt firſt of all ſhew us their immediate Commiſſion from Chriſt, as the Apoſtles had. Secondly, They muſt all ſhew us, that what they doe in Church-matters, under colour and pretence of Apoſtolicall liberty, is Heb. 3. 5.

none other, but what they have by expreſſe command from Chriſt by his Spirit. And thirdly, becauſe they are not able to ſhew this, they muſt uſe their liberty no further, then the liſts and limits of Scripture doe permit, which holds forth an exact and perfect rule, for all preciſely to obſerve, without the leaſt variation. As knowing that ſevere law of God, often uſed in Scripture, and wherewith, as with a bounder-ſtone, the whole Book of God is cloſed up, and that with a ſolemne proteſtation of Chriſt himſelfe: *If any man ſhall adde unto theſe things, God ſhall adde unto him the plagues that are written in this book; And if any man ſhall diminiſh ought thereof, God ſhall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the Holy Citie.*

Revel. 22. 18, 19.

So Deut. 4. 2. and 12. 32. Prov. 30. 6.

But ſome will haply object; This is meant, not in point of *Church-government, Diſcipline, Rites, Ceremonies, as left to mans liberty to ordaine, adde, ſupply, inſtitute, according to the diverſity of the lawes and cuſtomes of every Nation*; but in matter of Doctrine, Story, and Prophecy. To which I anſwer (though ſufficiently noted before, and now in one word) if God were ſo exact about the forme of the Tabernacle, (a type of Chriſts Church under the Goſpell) to have all things obſerved according to the Patterne, even unto the leaſt pin; what reaſon can any reaſonable man give, why Chriſt, the ſame Law-giver, and patterne it ſelfe, ſhould be leſſe carefull over his Church in the New Teſtament, ſo as to leave it at ſix and ſeven, to the liberty of all *Kingdomes* and *Nations of the world*, to ſet up in the Church what *Government, Diſcipline, Rites, Ceremonies, Canons*, they pleaſed, upon what pretence ſoever as for the *Churches peace and welfare*? Hath not the opening of this one ſluce, let in ſuch an Inundation of all manner of humane inventions in this kind, as hath wel-nigh drowned the whole world in all manner of ſuperſtition and error? Therefore, my deare brother *Prime*, aſſure your ſelfe, not all the wits, not all the learning in the world, will be able to aſſert this your aſſertion, but that it muſt of neceſſity fall to ground with its owne weight; and there, brother, let it lie, or rather die, and bury it there, whence it came. All that Chriſt appointed is exactly to be followed, though Chriſt was not ſo exact in circumſtantials under the Goſpell; becauſe 1. That was a typicall and figurative worſhip. 2. Chriſt now looks more to ſubſtan-

ſubſtantialls, *Joh.* 4.24. wherein he is more ſtrict, 1 *Cor.* 5.

And where you ſay, that as in the *Apoſtles* times, *Chriſtians multiplied*, ſo alſo their *Churches*, *Church-Officers*, and their *Church-Government*, *Diſcipline varied*: Conſider that here was no variation of the Rule; but by degrees the rule of Church-government and Diſcipline was perfected, not varied. The Temple was ſeven yeares in building, firſt hewing, ſquaring, then erecting ſtone after ſtone, timber after timber, each in his proper place, here was no variation of the frame and forme of the Temple all this while, but the worke went up day by day, till it came to perfection, according to the patterne in writing given to *David* by the Spirit. Even ſo, while the ſpirituall Temple is framing, the daily goings up of it by order after order, and rule after rule, is no variation, but a graduall tending to perfection, till all be finiſhed; as we now ſee the whole frame of Church-government for all true Evangelicall Churches ſo compleated in the New Teſtament, as nothing under the paine aforeſaid, may either be diminiſhed, or added to it. And the ſame Orders are preſcribed to all the Churches; *So ordaine I in all Churches*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 7. 17. So for the collection for the Saints, and for the firſt day of the weeke for publick meetings (as before) the ſame order he gives to the Church of *Corinth* which he doth for the Churches of *Galatia*, 1 *Cor.* 16. 1, 2. So Officers choſen and ordayned in every Church, *Act.* 14. 23. *Tit.* 1. 5. 7. So as if one Church for the ſmalneſſe of it have fewer Officers, and another Church for the largeneſſe of it more in number (as the Church in *Jeruſalem* had need of ſeven Deacons, both for the magnitude of the Congregation, and the multitude of the poore therein, *Act.* 6.) yet this makes no variation in the forme of Church-government, as differing one from another, either for ſubſtance, or circumſtance, ſaving onely *ſecundum magis & minus*, as a little man is a man, as well as the talleſt man. 1 Chron. 28.

In a word, thoſe Arguments, which you by way of deriſion ſet downe in your owne forme of words, with their *Ergoes*, for as much as they are of your own deviſing, I therefore leave them with you to conſider better of them. Onely one I cannot paſſe by, without wrong to Chriſt, to his word, to his Spirit, to his Apoſtles.

Every

Every man (ſay you) in his Infancy, is borne deſtitute of Religion, of the uſe of ſpeech, reaſon, underſtanding, faith, legs, &c. *Ergo*, He ought to continue ſo, when he is growne a man.

Yet this is the maine Argument of ſome Independents; ſay you: O brother! Of what Independents? As whence this Argument? Becauſe they hold, that in nothing they ought to ſwerve from the exact Rule, Gods Word, for the government of Churches? And doe you compare the Scripture (as it was in the Apoſtles time) to a child in his Innocency, deſtitute, &c? So as, if we will not tranſgreſſe the bounds of Scripture for Church-goverment, we doe as much in effect, as argue, *Every man in his Infancy is borne deſtitute of Religion*, &c. *Ergo*, he ought to continue ſo, when he is growne a man? We dare goe no further, then the Scripture leads us; therefore we are a company of Infants. Good brother, call in theſe extravagants. 2. We ſay the Churches were as perfect then as ever ſince; they had all Ordinances, the moſt eminent Officers, the moſt large gifts, &c. and as many in a place called to the Faith, as can be ſhewen in any one place ſince, to have come in voluntarily to the Goſpell, *Act.* 8. 10. 12. *Chap.* 21. 20.

The tenth Queſtion.

This Queſtion is reduced thus;

Propoſition. " Such as cannot produce any one ſolid reaſon, why they ought " not (in point of conſcience) willingly ſubmit to a Presbyteriall " Government, in caſe it ſhall be eſtabliſhed among us, by the " generall conſent of the Synod, and Parliament, as moſt conſo- " nant to Gods Word, the Lawes & Government of our Realme: " ought to be reputed to be in a high degree of Obſtinacy, Sin- " gularitie, Arrogancy, ſelf-ends, and peremptory Schiſme.

Aſſumption. " But Independents cannot produce any one ſolid reaſon, why " they ought not ſo to doe, as aforeſaid.

Concluſion. " Therefore Independents ought to be reputed to be in a high " degree of Obſtinacy, Singularity, Arrogancy, ſelf-ends, and " peremptory Schiſme.

Now truly brother, a heavie charge you lay upon thoſe poore creatures you doe ſo becall *Independents*. As 1. of *Obſtinacy*.

If

If that be *obſtinacy*, againſt mens conſciences not to yield blind obedience to mens commands in point of Religion. 2. Of *ſingularity*. If that be *ſingularity*, for a few to enter in at the ſtrait gate, and to walk in at the narrow way. If that be ſingularity, to doe that which the multitude will not doe: to come under the government of Chriſts Kingdome, in the Government of our conſciences, and of his Churches, which is a Principle, you your ſelfe in termes cannot, dare not deny. 3. Of *Arrogancy*: If that be *Arrogancy*, for one Church not to exalt it ſelfe over another, or for Paſtors not to Lord it over their flocks. 4. Of *ſelfe-ends*: If that be *ſelf ſeeking*, which (if any other) is a ſelf-denying, and a taking up of our croſſe dayly, as Malefactors ready to be crucified, as without which reſolution wee cannot follow Chriſt. If that be ſelfe-ſeeking, to ſtrip our ſelves of the preferments and favours of the world, to be expoſed naked to the reproach of all, to be accounted the out-caſts of the world, and the *off-ſcouring of all things*, as at this day. And laſtly, Of *peremptory ſchiſme*: If that be ſchiſme, whereby we ought to ſeparate our ſelves from all doctrines contrary to what is delivered, *Rom.* 16, 17. and ſo farre as is poſsible, from all the rudiments of the world, from the Ordinances of men, which are not after Chriſt, that ſo wee might adhere to him, and *walke in him*, being *taught by him*, as *the truth is in Ieſus*. Luke 9.23. Eph.1.21. Col.2.6.

But now, that theſe *Independents* ſhould undergoe all theſe, τὰ σκληρὰ, *hard ſpeeches*, and yet not to be able to ſhew one ſolid reaſon for it, ſurely then, a fools cap and a bell were fitteſt for them. But I hope, brother, if you have but read hitherto, and well weighed in a juſt ballance, the many reaſons we have already given you, perhaps in ſome of them at leaſt, if not in all, you will find ſomething, that may challenge the title of *ſolid*, in your clearer and more ſolid judgment. Iude 15.

Now to your Argument. Firſt of all I might deny the neceſsity of the conſequence of your Propoſition. For it is not neceſſary that every truth ſhould ceaſe to be truth, becauſe every one cannot ſhew a ſolid reaſon for it. The fire hath an eſſentiall form, and yet no man can find it out. It burneth, yet none can ſhew a ſolid reaſon why. The Martyrs ſome of them profeſſed they could not diſpute for that truth they held: but (ſay they) we can dye for it. And *Formæ rerum neſciuntur.* Scaliger. Exercit.

what if that Church-government, which your *silly Independents* hold, be a truth, and yet some of them not able to shew one solid reason for it? Must it therefore not bee a truth? As the Apostle saith; *What if some did not beleeve? Shall their unbeleefe make the faith of God without effect?* Rom. 3. 3.

But I flatly deny your Assumption; and affirme, that your *Independents* both have, and doe, and can produce many solid Reasons, why they may not, ought not in point of Conscience, willingly submit to such a Presbiteriall Government, as you prescribe, because framed by the generall consent of a Synod and Parliament, *conceived* by them as consonant to Gods Word, the Lawes and Government of our Realme. One Reason is, *Consonant to Gods Word*, and *conforme to the Lawes of this, or any other Realme*, cannot stand together; as before is shewed. And the reason hereof is, because Christs Kingdome is so transcendent, so absolute, distinct, *Independent*, (if you will) as it is not obliged to conforme and stoop to *humane lawes*, *and peoples manners*, as you put a necessity upon it. A second Reason; because you require obedience to that, which men shall *conceive consonant to Gods Word*, &c. Touched also before, and now againe to put you in mind. And therefore upon this ground we ought not in point of conscience to subject and captivate our faith to mens opinions. A third Reason, why we may not doe it, is, because you require absolute obedience to the generall consent of Assembly and Parliament. Now wee dare not pin our faith upon generalitie of mens opinions, The generality of the votes of the *Iewes* State carried it away, to crucifie their King. If the whole world might vote this day, the generality would be against Christ, as hee is indeed the onely Anoynted King, Priest, and Prophet. What if the generality vote amisse, while yet they may *conceive* all to bee right, because *consonant* to what they most affect? No, though orthodox and godly, as was shewed before in the instance of *Paphnutius* in the Councell of *Nice*. A fourth Reason; Because we acknowledge Christ alone to be Lord of our Conscience, and no power of men on earth herein to be joyned with him. *Harm. Confess. sect.* 11. *The Magistrate rules the body, not the minde.* And therefore we dare not subjecate our conscience to humane lawes, customes, and manners, as to Gods Word, with which you

you doe ſo equally yoake them. So as wee anſwer you with the Apoſtles, when all the ſynedrion of the Iewiſh State with one generall voyce interdicted them from preaching in Chriſts Name: *Whether it be equall in the ſight of God, to obey you rather then God, judge ye.* A fifth Reaſon: Becauſe the Holy Ghoſt by the Apoſtle expreſly condemns all humane Ordinances in matters of faith and Religion, whereof Church-governments a branch, and a doctrinall part, ſo as mans law therein may not bind the conſcience; As *Col.* 2. from *verſe* 8. to the end of the Chapter. Act. 4. 19. Et ſing. by 20. &c.

A ſixth Reaſon: Becauſe it is Antichriſtian to deny Ieſus to bee the Chriſt, that is, the onely King, Prieſt, and Prophet of his Church. Hee is an *Antichriſt*, that denieth any of theſe three Offices. But to deny Chriſt to be the onely King of his Church, is to deny him in one of his Incommunicable Offices. And they thus *deny Ieſus to bee the Chriſt*, that place man with Chriſt in his throne, that ſet *humane Lawes and Cuſtomes of all Nations* cheek by jowle with the *Word of God*. Here *Ieſus is denied to be the Chriſt*. I could here adde many more reaſons to theſe: but theſe may ſuffiſe, that you may ſee there bee ſome Reaſons which your *Independents* can produce, and thoſe ſo *ſolid*, as the Gates of hell ſhall not prevaile againſt. 1 Iohn 2. 22.

But, ſay you, if we thus claime *exemption* from ſuch *binding Decrees* of men in the matters of Chriſt, and *that in point of conſcience*, then may alſo *Papiſts, Anabaptiſts, and all other ſects claim the like exemptions, upon the like grounds.* Brother, for that, I hope you will put a difference between orthodox Churches, and heterodox. But I ſay againe, for any mans conſcience, bee it never ſo erroneous, as that of Papiſts, yet certainly the conſcience of ſuch ſimply conſidered in it ſelfe, nor you, nor any man in the world hath any thing to doe, further then to inſtruct and admoniſh, and labour to enforme and rectifie: enforce it you may not.

But ſhall we tolerate Popery, and ſo idolatry in our Land? *Obj.*

I anſwer; It is one thing to tolerate Popery and Idolatry publickly in a land, and another to tolerate a man in his *Conſcience*. Magiſtrates may not tolerate open Popery and Idolatry to be ſet up in the land: but the conſcience of a Papiſt, they are no maſters, or judges of. If the Civill-Magiſtrate ſee any of Gods Commandements actually violated, *hee beareth not the ſword* Rom. 13.

for naught; evill actions he must punish: but hee hath no power, over the conscience of any, to punish a man for that, so long as he makes no open breach of Gods Commandements, or the just lawes of the Land. And so in the rest. And, brother, in your twelfth Question, you confesse so much, reproving (but how justly) your *Independents* for *censuring the very hearts and spirituall estates of others*; and alleadging that Scripture, that *forbids men to judge, because God only knows mens hearts*. Now, brother, that which you deny to others, as to bee judges of mens hearts, and spirituall estates, why will you either assume it to your selfe, or attribute it to others, by placing them in Christs throne, and thereby displacing Christ himselfe? As the Apostle saith, Rom. 14. 4. *Who art thou that judgest anothers servant? To his Master he standeth, or falleth.* Much more, who art thou, that judgest Gods servant? And *ver.* 10. *And why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? We shall all stand at the Judgement seat of Christ.* Christ therefore is the sole Iudge of every mans conscience; even hee alone, that is the Iudge of quicke and dead. And brother, let me put it to your *Conscience*, Doe you think it equall, that either your conscience should be a rule of mine, or mine of yours? And if no one mans conscience may be the rule of anothers; certainly neither may all the mens consciences in the world be the Iudge of any one mans. 2. However we finde neither rule, example, nor reason from Scripture, to force men to Religion originally; yet the Rabins say, if man kept the seven precepts of *Noah*, hee might not bee forced further.

The eleventh Question,

Concerning this question, it containeth in it nothing but grievous invectives against the way you call *Independent*: You call it *a Seminary of Schismes, and dangerous divisions in Church, State*: So did *Tertullus* the Iews Advocate against *Paul*, charge him for *a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Iews, throughout the world*, Acts 24. 5. You pretend to ponder it in the ballance of Scripture, or right reason; but you neither shew us Scripture nor right reason, to ballance it in. You call it *a Floodgate to let in an Inundation of heresies, errors, sects, libertinisme, and law-*

lawlesnesse, without means of suppressing them, when introduced. For this you bring Mr. *Williams* his bloody tenent. Now suppose him, or his booke, hereticall: will you make the way of Christ so too? There was one *Iudas* a traitor, shall therefore all the rest of the Apostles, or their Apostolicall calling, be so too? You alleadge also *Anabaptisticall, Antinomian, hereticall, Atheisticall opinions*, as of the *Soules mortality, Divorce at pleasure*: will you therefore father all these upon Christs Kingly government? In *Luthers* time sundry heresies sprung up; was *Luther* therefore either the cause or occasion of them? Doe we not know, that Mothes are bred in the purest cloth? And the dunghills send forth strongest savours when the Sunne shines hottest. Is either the cloth the proper cause of the moth, or the Sunne of the stinking vapour? Never greater errors have bin, then since the Gospell hath clearly shined forth. True it is indeed, that these divisions, and diversities of opinions, are with bleeding hearts to be bewailed: But shall the Gospell of the Kingdome beare the burthen of all? This were, as with the Christians in Rome in *Neroes* time; when any judgement of God fell upon the City, he would still impute it to the Christians, and punish them for it. But we are taught better. When the good Husband-man sowed pure wheat in his field, the enemy came and superseminated tares; shall wee therefore blame the wheat, because the tares come up with them?

But that you impute to this way libertinisme and lawlesnesse: Good brother consider, are we *Libertines*? or are wee *lawlesse*? Nay may wee not herein plead for our selves, that in all things we indeavour to conforme our selves wholly to the law of Christ: and if in any thing we offend justly any just law of the land, wee refuse not to suffer. Only, brother, let not that Imperiall Edict be revived, that if any confessed themselves to be Christians they should be put to death; so such as you call *Independents*, should for this very name suffer. As *Tertullian* said, *Nomen pro crimine*, when the very name of *Christian* was taken for a crime. And for meanes of suppressing errors, what meanes could suppresse those many errors that sprung up to the successive ages of the Church? Was not the word of God the onely meanes, and not humane power? yea humane power is as well a meanes to maintain heresies,

reſies as to ſuppreſſe them. You know what *Conſtantine* and his ſonne did to maintain the *Arrian* hereſie. And orthodox Independent Churches are as good means as any other; together with the care and countenance of the Magiſtrate, if it may be had, to defend them, and inable them to ſend forth labourers, without which the Presbytery will bee as barren, breaſt and womb, as any other.

The twelfth Queſtion.

The ſundry paſſages of this queſtion, as I find them ſcattered along, I ſhall glean them, and ſo bundle them up for a concluſion at this time: For this queſtion ſeems to be a *Lerna* of Queries.

And firſt, you quarrell the Title of *Independencie*. Truly, brother, none of all thoſe whom you thus intitle, doe at all glory in this name, ſo as to give you thanks for your ſo often ſtiling them thus in one poore ſheet of paper, ſeeing th y cannot imagine you doe it *honoris gratia*, while every where you ſet it as a brand. Notwithſtanding we are not ſo aſhamed of it, as utterly to diſclaime it; and that for two reaſons. Firſt, for diſtinction ſake between us, and that which you call your Presbyteriall government. The ſecond is, becauſe this word *Independent* is to ſignifie, that we hold all particular Churches of Chriſt, to bee of equall authority, and none to have or exerciſe jurisdiction over another, but that each Church is under Chriſts government, as the ſole Head, King, Lord, Law-giver thereof. But wee would not that you ſhould give us this as a nick name, or a name of reproach, or badge of ſcorne: nor that you ſhould call us ſo, as if we denied ſubjection to civill authority in matters of civill government nor yet that you ſhould mean ſuch an *Independencie*, as if we held not good correſpondence with all ſiſter-Churches, by way of conſociation, conſultation, communion, communication, mutuall conſolation, ſupportation and (in a word) in all things, duties, offices, as wherein Chriſts Kingdom is held up, the graces of the Churches exerciſed, & the liberties of each Church preſerved intire, which is the glory of Chriſt, which we have touched before. And therefore, brother, you mightily miſtake the matter, when you interpret *Independency*, as not needing both the *Communion* and *aſſiſtance* of other *perſons, Nations, Churches.*

Then ſecondly you queſtion, *Whether the Nationall Covenant doth*

doth in ſundry reſpects ſtrongly ingage the Nation againſt Independency? Truly, brother, not at all, ſo long as all our Reformation is to be reduced to, and regulated by the word of God. And that is a ſure foundation, whereon our *Independencie* dependeth. In which *reſpect* the Nation is by the *Covenant ingaged for Independencie.*

Thirdly, you queree, whether if *Independencie* (rightly taken ſtill as before) if *ſtript of all diſguiſing pretences, be not Phariſaicall, vainglorious, ſelfe-conceitednesſe, &c.* Here, brother, you laſh us with a whip of many cords, but that our armour is proof. So you have done more then *ten times*, yea all along. And that all this ſhould come from a friend, a brother, a ſufferer, from a companion, & counſellor, how hard is it to be born? And you tell us of *diſguiſing pretences, if ſtript*; and for this, you have provided an *unmasking* for us. O brother, we have no ſuch *diſguiſings*, as to feare your *unmaſkings*. We may in this boldly anſwere with the Apoſtle, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 3. 4. 5. And for *Phariſaicall. Spirituall pride, vain-glory, ſingularity, ſelfe-conceitednesſe of ſuperlative holineſſe*, which as dirt you throw ſo liberally in our face; To this brother, I will ſay no more but this: *Si ſat eſt accuſaſſe, quis innocens erit?* If a bare and malicious accuſation be enough to faſten a crime, who ſhall be innocent? And did you ever enter into our hearts, to ſee what ſecret ſpirituall tumours, and apoſtumations be there? and if not, how come you preſently, in the very ſame ſentence, and with the ſame breath to blow all this beſmearing duſt into your owne face? For you charge us with *paſſing uncharitable cenſures upon mens hearts, and ſpiritual eſtates; of which* (ſay you) *God never made us Judges, and forbids us for to judg becauſe he onely knowes mens hearts* (as was noted before.) Now then, brother, why doe you thus judge *the hearts and ſpirituall eſtates of your brethren*? Conſider it well in cold blood. And, brother, what doe you ſee in the Independencie, that you ſhould thus judg them? *The Tree is knowne by the Fruits*. Are they ambitious of preferments, of glory of the world, of favour of great ones, of praiſe of men that doe voluntarily forſake all, and *ſtrip* themſelves of all to follow naked Chriſt? Phariſees indeed *loved the prayſe of men more then the praiſe of God.* That's Phariſaicall, ſo in the reſt. Therefore brother

Nudum Chriſtum, nudus ſequere. Hieron

brother, tell not the world what malice may suggest unto you to think of us, but what you see or observe in us. And yet, brother, the rule of charity is, that you should first tell your brother privately of his fault, before you blaze it to the world. But thus at least we come to know our fault. And what is it? Wee doe, (say you) *deem our selves so transcendently holy, sanctified and religious above others; that we esteem them altogether unworthy of, yea wholly exclude them from our Communion & Church-society, as Publicans, heathens, or prophane persons (though perhaps as good, or better then our selves) unlesse they will submit to their Church-covenants, & government, refusing all true brotherly familiarity, society with them.* So you. Now, brother *Prynn*, I confesse I am one of those, whom you call *Independents*; and did you ever observe any such supercilious strangenesse of carriage in me towards you, and other of your and my friends, no lesse zealous against Independents, then your selfe, as you charge us withall? Have there not been many interchangeable invitations between you and me, with loving acceptations, whereby we have enjoyed mutuall society, in all friendly and brotherly entertainment, saving still some quarrels about this way, but ever parting friends? And more frequent it had been, had your occasions, and sometimes mine owne, permitted. And neither at this day, since these your invectives came forth, (though they were no small griefe to me, and that even for your sake) am I become a greater stranger to you, either in face or affection, then I was before. For I am so perswaded of your good nature, that did you truly epprehend, and dive into the mystery of Christs Kingly government in his Churches and Children, certainly you would never have thus sharpened and imbittered your style against your brethren; the Lord open your eyes to see it. But however, brother, either be more moderate in censuring, or else censure not at all, without just cause.

But we *exclude* (say you) *as good or better then our selves from communion and Church-society with us.* Surely it may be so; but, brother, we *exclude* them not; but they *exclude* themselves. And you give the reason, because they wil not submit to the Churches government. But it doth not hence follow, that wee therefore deem either our selves *so transcendently holy* (as you say) or others altogether

altogether *unworthy*. But, brother, we eſteem the government of Chriſts Church ſo holy, as we cannot think them fit to be admitted (be they never ſo good) that think ſo ſlightly of the way, and of them that walk in it, that they refuſe to agree to walk in this way with the people of God. Would you admit of a member into your family who is diſaffected with your courſes, and orders of the family? What cauſe then hath he to complain, if upon knowledge thereof you refuſe to entertain him? If therefore every family ſhould be carefull to provide for its own peace, by having all in it of like affection and judgement, (if poſſible) why not Chriſts owne houſe and family? And, brother, the truth is, (for we love no *diſguiſing*, as to need any *unmasking*) wee love not in a time of reformation, after a generall tincture of ſuperſtition and will-worſhip, blindly to goe to work, to admit of all commers, and to caſt Chriſts *Pearles* and *holy things* to ſuch as we know not. Or if we be perſwaded they be truly godly, and yet they are not perſwaded of the warrantableneſſe of this way, how can they with a good conſcience deſire communion with us? And if not, how can the Church receive them? Nor indeed doe any ſuch offer themſelves; nor doth the Church impoſe any ſuch conditions, as a godly Chriſtian hath cauſe not to accept. We deſire to doe thoſe things that pleaſe God, namely, ſuch as he commends and commands. *Rev.* 2. 2. Chriſt commends the *Angell of the Church of Epheſus, for not bearing with thoſe that are wicked, and for trying thoſe that ſayd they were Apoſtles, and were not, but were found lyers.* So ſome may come that profeſſe themſelves to be Chriſtians, that is, to be godly, to be beleevers, but we dare not receive them without triall: if they refuſe to be tried, we may the more ſuſpect them. And what intereſt hath any to Church Communion, that is not a member, or to the ſeal, that is not in Covenant? And we love not to do that, for which to repent afterwards. We deſire all our members may be ſuch as they may peaceably and ſweetly continue with us. We are loath to have the world offended by the unworthy walking of any one member. And we deſire by our beſt providence to prevent, that none once admitted, ſhould ever be caſt out again. And brother, all this we hold to be our duty, for the preferring of the honour of Chriſt, and of his Ordinances, and of his

Churches *in the beauties of holinesse.* Others may take a broader way, if they please; wee dare not. The Church and body of Christ is not of so slight account with us, as that we should carelesly and promiscuously admit of every one that offer themselves, without some triall of them, both for the Churches satisfaction, and for the account shee must make to Jesus Christ. How strict the Jews were, *Ainsworth* in *Gen.* 12. *v.* 17. relates out of the Rabbines. And even *Bellarmine* himselfe had such a cleare apprehension of the generall nature of Christs Church, (though himselfe did not experimentally and particularly know it) that hee useth these words: Ecclesia preeipuè, &c. *The Church especially and intentionally, gathereth onely beleevers, such as have true faith in their heart. And when any hypocrites are mingled among, such as truly beleeve not, it falleth out besides the intention of the Church. For if it could know them, it would never admit them; or being casually admitted, it would forthwith exclude them.* Thus *Bellarmine*; which he sets down as a most true speculative Prinple (though but ill applied, and worse practised by him and his, and such like,) which yet all true Churches should be carefull to observe, and put in practice. And truly, brother, we desire to do this, that, if it be possible, no misbeleever, no prophane liver, no hypocrite be admitted a member of Christs body (though an hypocrite having his vizard on, may sometimes * creep in unawares into the Church) And therefore diligent circumspection is used for prevention. And *turpius ejicitur, quam non admittitur hospes: A guest is more fairly kept out, then cast out.* This, brother, is our course, that we hold in admitting of members; we think we cannot be too wary, though too strict we are not. We suspect the gold that will not abide the touch. A Christian name may silver over the copper, such as the Scripture calls *reprobate silver, Jerem.* 6. 30. Though we know each currant coin hath its allowance of allay; and each beleeving Saint so many grains allowance; but all sincere, no thing counterfeit. And as for Church-covenant, we have sufficiently spoken before.

Ecclesia praeipue & ex intentione, fideles tantum colligit, qui veram fidem in corde habent. Cum autem admiscentur aliqui ficti, qui verè non credunt, id accidit praeter intentionem Ecclesiae si enim eos nosse posset, nunquam admitteret, aut casu admissos, continuè excluderet. Bellar. de Eccles. l. 3. c. 10. See also D. *Field* of the Church, Book 1. cap. 7.

*Such were called of old, παρείσακτοι. Euseb.

The last charge you lay upon Independencie, is, *uncharitablenesse, carelesnesse, and neglect of one another welfare, and the like.* Brother, for uncharitablenesse, let our practises, the best proofes of true charity, plead for us. We have manifested our love and loyalty,

loyalty to the State, whereof we are natural and politicall members. For the safety thereof we have powred out our estates to the very bottome. We dare herein compare with all others of our rank and meanes. My selfe a poore man, am out for the State, between foure and five hundred pounds; and, I blesse God, I have done it with a cheerfull heart, nor for squint respects to lay out so much at once, to receive of the State so much annuity. Yet I speak it not to glory, but you have compelled me. And besides their means, none have more prodigally adventured and spent their lives for the State, then your Independents have; and for none hath the God of Battels appeared more. And but for stirring up envie (which needs not) I should put you in mind of *Marston-moore*. In a word, brother, we dare challenge all the world in point of fidelity to the State, and our native countrey. Where be they that more love, honour our Senat, Synod, Syncdrion? Who pray more frequently, more fervently for them? So that herein you cannot say we are Independents, as for want of true love, and that of the best kind, to the publick Cause and State, from which our Independencie is so farre from separating our hearts and affections, with all our abilities to serve it, as that it hath cleared it self to be as fast & firmly united unto it, as any other whatsoever. And for true charitableness, brother, where is it to be found, if not in those Churches you call *Independent*? But you will say, this love is among our selves. And God grant it may ever be so: Yet it ends not here, but extends to all. And, brother, for a close, I challenge you to shew me any one parochiall Congregation in *England*, wherein there is, or can be the like love one to another, the like care one for another, the like spirituall watchfulnesse one over another, the like union and communion of members in one mysticall body, in a sympathy of affections, in such a fraternitie as is described, *Psal.* 133. a lively type of a true Church of Christ. Till you shew us the like in any of your Parochiall Assemblies, consisting of your mixed multitude, good brother, restrain your spirit so mightily imbittered against us, lest in charging us with *uncharitableness*, your self alone be found to be uncharitable. And so I have done with your first *twelve Questions*.

A VINDICATION OF CHURCHES, COMMONLY CALLED *INDEPENDENT.* OR AN ANSVVER To Mr. PRYNNES ſecond Book.

MY deare Brother, to your twelve new Interrogatories I preſent you with a new Anſwer. I call it new, becauſe I ſhall cull out ſuch paſſages, as I find new, or not ſo much inſiſted on in your former twelve. Which as they are fewer, ſo I ſhall be the ſhorter, for as much as in the former, I have been the larger. But brother, I find not that in your Book, which you pretend in your Title, to wit, the *Unmasking of Independency*. Nor can we expect it of you: for in your Proeme you ſay, that *the Independents have not dogmatically, and in direct termes, diſcovered the full truth of what they aſſert*. If not, what kind of viſage will you diſcover, when you have taken off the mask? Surely, by *your* handling of the matter, you mean to unmask ſome hags face, ſuch as pleaſed the Painter. Which when you have done, it will appeare to all the wiſe-hearted, that it is not the face of *Independency*, as wherein there ſhines forth ſuch a beauty, as it ſeemeth you yet never ſaw.

In your Preface to the *Courteous Reader*, you ſay, *We politickly conceale the principall grounds, and more deformed parts of our Church-Platforme, for feare of miſcarrying*. Good brother, who told you ſo? Remember your own leſſon before, *Judge not*. But indeed, had you reproved us (yet in love and meekneſſe) for not ſetting forth more fully a compleat Modell of this fabrick,

brick, or ſpirituall houſe, it had been ſomething. Which yet if it were done, you would not impute it to policy, that it was not ſooner done. But when it is exactly done, you will find no deformed parts at all in it: but contrariwiſe a greater beauty then in that famous Temple that *Solomon* built, as being the ſpirituall Temple of Jeſus Chriſt; ſo as I am ſorry you are put to the paines of *pumping out our determinations* (as you ſay) *by your Queſtions:* When as you ſhould rather find it as *a fountaine flowing forth in the ſtreets.* But brother, how doe you write by *Queſtion*, not *deciſion* (as you ſay) when your *Queſtions* prove to be *deciſions*, as your former twelve are? And what doe you els, but *refute* upon *bare conjectures*, *Andabatarum more pugnando*, as thoſe at *blind-man-buff.* For your Charges upon us are very ſore, and (as many doe ſay) bitter, ſo farre beyond reaſon, as you are not able truly to ſay, Wherefore. * Eph. 2. 21. Prov. 5. 16.

For your firſt Queſtion, *Whether the Independent forme of Church-government be any where to be found in the Old or New Teſtament:* this we have reſolved in your former Twelve Queſtions: ſo as this is no new Interrogatory, unleſſe you put the greater difference between *Queſtions*, and *Interrogatories.* And though it were in no antiquitie (which yet we have ſhewen before) nevertheleſſe, if it be found in the Scripture (as there it is) whatſoever clouds of the myſtery of iniquitie have darkened the luſtre of it for ſo many hundred yeares: yet this cannot plead preſcription againſt it. For if *Nullum tempus occurrit Regi:* then ſurely no tract of time can preſcribe againſt the law of Chriſts kingdome, which we finde upon ſacred record. But where, ſay you? Why, brother, this Houſe of God wherein Chriſt rules as King, ſtands upon ſo many Principles, as ſo many maine pillars, not to be ſhaken. As

1. It is a ſpirituall houſe, whoſe onely builder and governour is Chriſt, and not man. 1.

2. It is a ſpirituall kingdome, whoſe onely King is Chriſt, and not man. 2.

3. It is a ſpirituall Republick, whoſe onely Law-giver is Chriſt, and not man. 3.

4. It is a ſpirituall Corporation, or body, whoſe onely head is Chriſt, and not man. 4.

5. It

5. 5. It is a Communion of Saints, governed by Christs Spirit, not man's.

6. 6. Christs Church is a Congregation called and gathered out of the world by Christs Spirit and Word, and not by man.

These Principles are such, as the Adversaries themselves of this kingdome of Christ, cannot, dare not deny. And out of these Principles doe issue these Conclusions.

1. 1. That no man is the builder of this spirituall house.

2. 2. That no man, nor power on earth hath a kingly power over this kingdome.

3. 3. That no earthly Law-givers may give Lawes for the government of this Republick.

4. 4. That no man may claime or exercise a headship over this Body.

5. 5. That no man can, or ought to undertake the Government of this Communion of Saints. *Item*, That none are of this Communion, but visible Saints. *Ergo*, a true visible Church of Christ cannot be defined, or confined to a parochiall multitude. *Item*, That, that Government of this Communion, is not extrinseeall, but intrinseeall, by the Spirit of the Word, and by the Word of the Spirit.

6. 6. That men may not appoint, limit, constitute what Congregations of all sorts they please, to be Churches of Christ, as Nations and Parishes.

Obj. But you confesse in generall, Christ to be the Builder, the King, the Law-giver, the Head, the Governour, the Caller, the Gatherer of his Churches,

Answ. If you doe, you must approve of those Churches you call *Independent*, as whereof Christ is the onely Builder, King, Law-giver, Head, Governour, Caller, and Gatherer. If you doe not, in denying Christ in these relations, you deny Christ in his absolute Regalitie.

But in your Answer to your Antiquerist, *pag.* 6. you doe in part grant Christ to be King internally in the soule, which, you say, *may passe for tolerable*. O brother! No more but *may passe for tolerable?* You that are so large-hearted to your friends, are you so strait-laced to Christ? Surely, Brother, Christ is the full and sole King, raigning in the heart and conscience of every true beleever.

leever. It were *intolerable*, not to grant this in its full latitude. But you absolutely deny Christs sole kingly Government, externall over his Churches. Brother, this is no lesse Christs kingly Prerogative, then the former. Hee that is King over every part of the body, must needs be King over the whole body. If therefore Christ be the only King over every mans conscience, so as no man, nor power on earth, may sit with him in this his Throne: then consequently by the self-same reason, must he by the Word of the kingdome, as the only Law thereof, exercise his kingly office over his Churches; so as no humane power or law may intermeddle to prescribe rules for the government, or forms of this spirituall House, and Kingdome. For otherwise, if man should set up a form of Government over the Church of Christ, to which all must conforme; then of necessitie should man be Lord over the conscience, which is the highest presumption against the most High. And then what mischiefs would follow? What intolerable tyrannie over the conscience? Then must your words (*ibid.*) come to passe: *If a moderated or regulated Episcopacie, the same with Presbyteria, should by the Synods advice, be unanimously established in Parliament, as most consonant to the Scriptures, and most agreable to the Civill Government, I shall readily submit unto it without opposition, and why not you, and all others?* So you. O Brother, I stand amazed! But I go on.

Then againe, the Scripture, as it sets downe the qualifications of the members of this body, so the forming of them in the body in the parts thereof, more principall, and lesse, superiour and inferiour, for order and well-being: As *Pastors and Teachers, Teaching and Ruling Elders, Helpes, Governments, Bishops, and Deacons*, or by what other means soever they are diversified in Scripture. And this is one uniforme forme of Government, which Christ hath fixed in his Churches, without any difference at all, but *secundum magis & minus* (as before) as lesser Churches have fewer Officers, greater more. So as, brother, if the old *Wine be better*, old *Presbyteria*, old *unlordly Episcopacy*, surely the *Independents* do justly challenge it: Which had you once truly tasted of, you would never have desired to drink other. The Lord remove that aguish humor * *Vexatus febre recusat optima.*

1 Tim. 5. 17. Phil. 1. 1. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Acts 6. & 20.

* Falingen.

Your second Interrogatory is, about the lawfull powe. of Civill

Civill Magistrates in all matters of Church-government, wherein you tax *some Independents* for extraordinary eclipsing the same. *Some*: what some may say, is one thing, must therfore the *Independent* Church-government say it too? You alledge for this a passage in the Answer of two of the brethren to *A. S.* for wch one of them is lately questioned: but, I hope, he wil clear himself. But the weight of this whole Interrogatory lies in your Marginall note: where you peremptorily conclude; *That the chief Government and ordering of the Church, and power of making Ecclesiasticall Lawes, or Canons to bind it, before the Law belonged to the Patriarks and others, was not as they were Priests, but Rulers, and Fathers of their Families: under the Law* (say you) *it belonged to Moses, to the Kings of Judah, Israel, and the morall Assemblies or Congregations of the Princes, Nobles, chiefe Captains, Heads, and Elders of the people: Therefore under the Gospel, by like reason and equity, and because it is a part of Christs kingly, not Priestly, or Propheticall Office, it must needs belong to Christian Princes, Magistrates, Parliaments, to whom Christ hath delegated his kingly Office; not to Ministers, to whom he hath given onely his Propheticall or Priestly Authoritie, not the Royall, as the Scriptures at large relate: nor yet to particular Congregations, who are not Magistrates, nor higher Powers, invested with Christs royall Authoritie.*

So you, where you tell us many strange things, but prove nothing. But, brother, in such a weighty Argument as this, your αὐτὸς ἔφη, will not serve the turne: yea, you here overthrow those Principles forementioned, That Christ is the onely *King*, so the onely *Priest*, the onely *Prophet* of his Church; which his three offices are incommunicable to any creature, as they are proper and peculiar onely to him; He is the onely King, &c. Now to be *solus, μόνος δυνάστης*, *The onely Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*; this is Christs Regall prerogative, which is incommunicable to any, or to all the powers on earth. It is no lesse incommunicable, then his omnipotencie, his omniscience, his omnipresence, and the rest of his incommunicable Attributes; no lesse then his Mediatorship. Those Patriarchs and Princes of Israel before the Law, and under the Law, from *Adam* to Christ, never had this power or prerogative, to make Ecclesiasticall Lawes, or binding Canons; no nor yet *Moses*, nor

1 Tim. 6. 15.

Kings

Kings of Judah, Israel, and Generall Assemblies, Princes, Nobles, chiefe Captaines, and Elders of the people, as you muster them up together in your marginall note. A ſeeming goodly Army indeed; but ſo many ſhadowes of men, for any ſuch power they had, as you would with your penfull of ink paint out unto us. And firſt for thoſe before the Law was given in *Sinai*: had they this power you ſpeak of? *Cain* and *Abel* brought their Sacrifices. What? Was it a * will-worſhip of their own election? If ſo, God had regarded *Abels* ſacrifice no more then *Cains*. How then? Their Sacrifice was of Gods own appointment: *Adam* had it from God, and his children from him. For as God revealed to *Adam*, Chriſt, ſo thoſe Sacrifices, types of Chriſt. Whence the learned Interpreter *Calvin* ſaith, *Tenendum eſt, &c. We are to hold, that the manner of ſacrificing was not unadviſedly divided by them, but delivered to them from God. For ſeeing the Apoſtle referres the dignity of Abels ſacrifice, as attributed to faith, it followes, he offered it not without Gods commandement. So as it could not have pleaſed God, had it not been according to his commandment.* So *Calvin*. Nor is all here expreſſed: no doubt they had an *Altar* alſo, whereon to offer for the ſanctifying and accepting the offering; which Altar was a type of Chriſt the true * Altar, to whom *Abels* faith had reſpect. Though we read not of Altar before *Gen.* 8. 20. We read alſo of difference of beaſts clean, & unclean, *Gen.* 7. By all which it is evident, that God gave a law to *Adam* and his offſpring, ſutable to that in Mount *Sinai*, for a rule of divine worſhip; ſo alſo for Church-government. And this further appeareth by the Law in *Sinai* afterwards, where *Moſes* is expreſſly charged to *do all things* (both for worſhip and Church-government) *according to the patern ſhewed him in the Mount*; as before we noted. And when the Temple was to be built, God gave to *David* an exact *patern* of all things, yea, of every particular, both inwriting and by his Spirit, not onely for worſhip, but for the whole miniſtration about the Temple, a type of Chriſts Church under the Goſpell, ſo as neither *Moſes* nor *Kings of Judah*, had the leaſt power to deviſe any other forme, then that preſcribed of God. The keeping of the Paſſover once in the ſecond month by *Ezechiah*, was extraordinary, upon a caſe of neceſſity. And for the *Kings of Iſrael*, will you equall them with the Kings of Judah?

Gen. 4. 4.

Col. 2. 23.

Calv. Com. ment. in cap. 4. Tem. dum eſt, non fuiſſe temere ex cogitat. ab illis ſ. criſtandi rem, ſed tr. tum divin. &c.

* Heb. 13. 1. 15.

1 Chron. 2 11. 12, &c. v. 19.

Had

Had they lawfull power, as *Jeroboam*, to set up his two *golden Calves*, and so to change the form of worship & Church-government? When *that King Abaz* set up his *Damascen Altar*, was it by a Regall power invested in him from God? So of other Kings of Juda, good or bad, they had no lawfull power at all to alter the form prescribed of God, one jot. And therefore, brother, you are wondred at, that being a man of much reading, and mightie parts, you should utter such strange things (*ne quid dicam durius*) as these are, and that so confidently, when you neither doe, nor ever can bring the least proofe, yea or colour of what you affirm. And therefore your inference upon such empty premises, that *therefore under the Gospel, by like reason and equity*, it *must needs belong to Christian Princes, Magistrates, Parliaments, to whom Christ hath delegated his Kingly office*, &c. is no consequence. Whence I note two things: 1. *Like reason and equity*. Now in your premises there is neither *reason nor equity*, because no truth in them. 2. Christ hath not *delegated his Kingly office to any Princes, Magistrates, Parliaments*, to set up any form of worship or Church-government of their devising, or *conceiving*, no more then hee did to all, or any of those you reckon up in the Old Testament. I pray God give you a better understanding in this mystery of Christ, and godly sorrow for these things. Take then the counsell of this great King: *Bee wise therefore, and understand; and kisse this King, this Sonne of God, by obeying him in all* that he saith, *as being* not onely the onely King, but the onely Prophet of his Church (as before) whom whoso *heareth* not IN ALL THINGS, *shall even be cut off from his people*. But how then doe you say, *This is a part of Christs Kingly office, not Priestly, or Propheticall*, to set up a government; and, *hee hath not communicated those other offices to Princes and Parliaments*: whereas Christ doth in all things regulate his *Kingly office* by his *Propheticall office*? And again, how say you, Christ hath not given his *Kingly office to Ministers*, but onely his *Priestly and Propheticall*; and yet you make an Assembly of Ministers as *Rector Chori* to be the leaders and guides to a *Form* of Reformation, and that necessarily? And denying such to bee Kings, or to have a *Kingly office*, you exclude them out of the Aime of those faithfull ones, whom Christ hath made a *Royall Priesthood*; even

Psal. 2.

Act. 3. 22.

Kings

Kings and Priests to God his Father. But so much of this second Interrogatory.

The third Interrogatory.

Touching this; 1. Wee assume not the power to gather Churches, but being sent or called to preach the *Word of the Kingdome*, thereby people thus called of God, come to be gathered into Church-fellowship, and so by consent doe chuse their Officers. * Mat. 13.

2. Such as are thus called, to acknowledge Christ their onely King, were not begotten *to this acknowledgment* by such Ministers as you speak of, who deny, disclaime, and preach against Christs Kingly government over mens consciences and Churches. So as such a conversion as you speak of, comes not home to whole Christ: and such, with their converters, doe deny Christs Kingly government; what kind of converts call you these? Or at least and best they are converted but in part, and that main thing wanting, to wit, Christs Kingly office, they come up to by the preaching thereof.

3. Such Ministers, when they set up Christs government, may (being agreed upon by all sides) have those Parishioners again, that for want of it at the first went from them.

4. Our solemne Vow and Covenant obligeth us not to any thing that is prejudicial to the authority of Gods word, and the libertie of a good conscience, considering how Churches are gathered out of all the world, not this place, nor that, not this house nor that, but out of * every nation, such as fear God, and * out of every house the sons of peace, & out of * every City or Town, all that receive the Gospel, are called and gathered to Christ. * Act. 10. Luke 19. 8, 10.

5. Concerning Christian liberty in joyning to severall Churches, as in the same house some to affect one, some another: you know what Christ saith, *Luke* 12. 51, 52, 53. And it is God that perswaded *Japhet* to dwell in the Tents of *Shem*. Gen. 9. 27. And, brother all that noyse you make all along, with extreame aggravations, as *Confusion, Distraction, implacable Contestations, Schismes, Tumults*, &c. What are they but the very out-cries which the Prelats ever used for the crying and keeping up of their

their Hierarchy, built upon the same sandy foundation. This is well noted in the *Harmony of Confessions, Sect. 11. Confession of Ausburg. These Senator-like Declamations though they be very plausible, and incense the minds of many against us, yet they may be confuted by most true and substantiall arguments.* As, *All the Prophets and Apostles were true lovers of the peace and concord of Nations and people: yet were they constrained by the commandement of God, to warre against the Devils kingdome, to preach heavenly doctrine, to collect a Church unto God,* and the like. And, *The true doctrine of God, and his true worship, must needs be embraced and received; and all errors, that tend to the dishonor of God, must be abhorred and forsaken, though all the world should break and fall down.* And much more there.

6. Though we are fully perswaded by Gods Word and Spirit, that this our way is Christs way; yet wee neither doe, nor dare judge others to be reprobates, that walk not with us in it, but we leave all judgement to God, and heartily pray for them: we our selves have been formerly ignorant of it, therefore wee pitie others.

7. Where you object, that *under pretence of Christian liberty, whole Houses, Parishes, Counties, may thus come to be divided into severall formes of Churches, as some for the Presbyteriall, some for the Hierarchicall, and so cause Schisme and ruines; or at least unavoidably subvert all ancient bounds of Parishes, all setled maintenance for the Ministery by tythes, &c.* Brother, for Christian liberties, who shall perswade the conscience, or who hath power over it, but he that made it, even God, the onely Judge thereof? And for difference of mens judgements in points of Religion, how can it be avoided? And yet it followes not, that upon such differences should come ruine to a State. What serveth the Magistrate, and the lawes of a civill State for, but to keep the peace? And as for Parishes, will you allow no Churches but Parishes? Or are Parishes originally any other but of humane, politicke, and civill constitution, and for civill ends? Or can you say, that so many as inhabit in every Parish respectively, shall bee a Church? Should such Churches and Parishes then necessarily be Churches of Gods calling and gathering? Are they not congregations of mans collection, constitution and coaction meerly?

What

What Churches then? And as for Tithes: what Tithes, I pray you, had the Apostles? Such as be faithfull and painfull Ministers of Christ, he will certainly provide for them: as when hee sent forth his Disciples without any *purse*, or provision, he asked them, *Lacked you any thing?* They said, *Nothing*. Surely, *the labourer is worthy of his hire*. And as for Ministers maintenance by Tithes, I referre you to the judgment of your learned brother Mr. *Selden*. And as for your Independent Ministers, they plead no other maintenance then the New Testament holds forth, yet not denying the Magistrate and State a power to appoint maintenance for the preaching of the word, as is done in New England, to those that are not members of Churches. And where you charge them, for *having the faith of Christ in respect of persons*, as if they admitted the rich, rather then the poore: Brother, I hope it is not so with others; I am sure, not so with me. And lastly, for your marginall young *Interrogatories*: As,

1. *Of how many members each Congregation?* I am sure your Congregations admit neither augmentation nor diminution, but according to the capacitie of every Parish.

2. *Within what precincts?* Christs Churches are not limited either to place or number.

3. *What set Stipends allowed?* Sufficient more or lesse.

4. *When and where Churches should assemble?* For *when?* at times convenient. For *where?* Not necessarily in this or that place.

5. *Who shall prescribe extraordinary times of fasting, or thanksgiving to them upon just occasions?* If the occasion be the Churches peculiar Interest, the Church agrees upon the time. But if it be publick, concerning the Politick body of the State, whereof we are native members, in whose weale or woe we sympathize, either we keep dayes of our own appointment extraordinary, or if the Civill State command and appoint a day, we refuse not to observe it.

6. *Who shall rectifie their Church-Covenants, Discipline, Censures, Government, if erroneous, or unjust?* First, Each Church useth her best meanes left her of Christ, within her selfe. Secondly, If need require, she useth the help of Sister-Churches. Thirdly, If any other, as the Civill State, be not satisfied, shee * refuseth not to yield an account of her actions, being required. 7. *Shew*

* Act. 15. 12.

7. *Shew us* (say you) *a sufficient satisfactory Commission from Gods Word for all they doe, or desire, before they gather any Churches.* Brother *Prynne*, you say you will pump out our thoughts: yea, it seemes, you will exenclate, pumpe out every drop that is in us. But stay, brother, you are not yet a Magistrate. And 2. wee hope you will not take up againe the Oath *ex Officio* to pump out all our secrets. And 3. Though I have for my part dealt very freely with you, as my brother, all along: yet give me leave to keep a Reserve, *Donec ad Triarios redierit res*, untill it come to a dead lift, in case we shall be brought before * Princes and Rulers, to give an account of what we *doe, or desire*. And 4. you put us upon too unreasonable a taske, to satisfie you in all that we *DOE, or DESIRE*. First make your particular exceptions, and demands for this, or that: and then we shall know the better how to shape you an Answer, as you see we have here done. What are all your books of Law-cases, all the Volumes of the Casuists, to the resolution upon general grounds, of incident matters, which could not be ruled till they happened? and yet the Government of States is one, and the doctrine of the Scripture in all generally necessary poynts cleare. And we desire you not too too much to grow upon us, when you see we are so coming, and free.

* Mat. 10 18.

The fourth Interrogatory.

This is much like the next before. For that was about *Ministers power to gather Churches*: this, *concerning the peoples power in uniting themselves in a Church, chooſing their Minister, erecting such a Government, as they conceive most ſutable to the Scripture. And so all manner of hereticks may set up Churches, and all manner of heresies, sects, be brought in.*

I answer, as before. A Church is a Citie of God, which by her Charter becomes a Citie, being called of God, and by the same Charter (the Scripture) chuseth her own Officers: and sets up no other government, but what her Charter prescribes. If any other doe otherwise, and doe pervert the Scripture, it is not to be imputed to the Church of Christ. Her liberties are no law for others licentiousnesse. It was so in the Apostles times, and

next ages after. The true Churches liberties were no true cauſe of ſo many hereſies; no more then the Chriſtians of old were the cauſe of the calamities of the Citie or Empire of *Rome*, becauſe *Nero* and other Tyrants falſly charged them, and as injuriouſly dealt with them. Nor may we caſt away the priviledges of Chriſtians, becauſe others abuſe them. Yea, whether we uſe our priviledges, or no, errours and hereſies will be. The Apoſtles, and Apoſtolick Churches, could neither keep, nor caſt them out; as is ſhewed before.

But brother, where you ſay, that *if this liberty of ſetting up an Independent Church-government be admitted: then by the ſelfe-ſame reaſon, they muſt have a like libertie to elect, erect what Civil forme of government they pleaſe: to ſet up a new Independent Republick, Kingdome, &c. By the ſelfe-ſame reaſon?* Surely by no *reaſon* at all. Shew us a *reaſon* hereof, and take all. And you know, that *Republicks, Kingdomes* are *Independent*, though not of Churches *electing, erecting*. It is unſatisfiable injury, and extreame irrationality thus to argue; for hath Chriſt given the ſame command to his people, as ſuch who are not of this world, nor their Kingdome, as he hath done to them in ſpirituals which he commands them to practiſe whoſoever forbids? 2. They ſet up no forme, but take that which is preſcribed, which God hath not done in civill government, but left it free, 1 *Pet.* 2 *Rom.* 13.

The fifth Interrogatory.

Herein you make a compariſon between *Preſbyteriall* and *Independent Churches*; Why not that, as well as this? And if this, why doe we not ſhew ſolid proofe of it? I anſwer: We deſire to enjoy ours, without making compariſon with yours. For proofe we have ſhewed ſufficient.

Then to a ſecond *Quere*; the anſwer is, not the Miniſter alone, nor the Congregation alone, but both together admit members, and ſet up Chriſts Government, not their own. And how ever you make us a Conventicle, conſiſting of inconſiderable ignorant members: I believe, brother *Prynne*, when you ſhall have any thing to doe with the moſt contemptible of ſuch Conventicles, as you eſteeme us, you will not altogether find us

ſuch,

ſuch, as you are pleaſed to terme us. And for *Nationall Parliaments, States*, wee honour them with whatſoever honour is due
* Rom. 13. 7. unto them, as Gods * Word commandeth us. And for a *Nationall Councell*, as this is, called to adviſe, not to be peremptory Judges in the matters of God over our conſciences, wee detract not their due honour too, as they are pious, and learned men.
2. Where you would have them have the ſame power in a Parliament and Synod, that they have in a Church, if they be members; it is anſwered, that all power is reſtrained to its own ſphere and place, ſo that we may have a greater power in another kind, and yet not that; as no Parliament-man hath the power of a Maſter of a family in the Parliament, though he have a greater.

The ſixth Interrogatory.

This *Interrogatory* hath ſundry branches: the anſwer whereunto reſpectively, will intimate what they be.

1. Wee ſay, as before, None of our Miniſters doe by any *uſurped authoritie gather Churches*.

2. We cannot conceive, that any law of the Land is againſt the ſetting up of *Chriſts kingdome* in the hearts of his people, and in thoſe Congregations called and gathered by the voyce of his Word. Nor doth the Miniſtery of Chriſts word more in this, then it did by *John Baptiſt*, Chriſt himſelfe, and his Apoſtles, when they called Chriſtian Congregations out of the *Jewes Nationall Church*. Even the Imperiall heathen Roman Lawes gave way to the preaching of Chriſts kingdome, and gathering of Churches within their Territories, Provinces, Cities.

3. For *Church-government, Covenant*, wee have ſaid enough before.

4. Concerning a *Nationall Church* alſo, we have ſpoke already in the former Anſwer. And I deſire brevitie, and not to anſwer all your repetitions and aggravations, leſt I may *nauſeam movere*.

5. It is one thing for a State to ſet up a new forme of Eccleſiaſticall Government, and another to pull downe the old. This they were bound unto by the Word of God: but not ſo that, unleſſe it be the ſame Church-government which Chriſt ſets downe in his Word; beſides which none other ought to be ſet

up,

up, though never so much pretended, and by men conceived to be *according to Gods Word*, when made *suitable to the Lawes, Customs of every Nation, and manners of the people*, as you affirme, of which before.

Lastly, This *Church-government*, which we professe, you shall never be able to proove *ridiculous* and *absurd*, as you conclude your *Interrogatory*.

The seventh Interrogatory.

This *Interrogatory* is about the *dismissing of members*: 1. to become *members of Presbyteriall Churches*: 2. Or *of other Independent Churches*. I answer, If any will desert their Congregation, who can let them? Yet it is the Churches care and duty to preserve it selfe, and all the members in unity of the body; and also from whatsoever may be sinfull. If any shall repent, and fall back, Churches are not more free, then * Christ himselfe was. If any for conveniency sake, or necessary occasion, desire to joyne with some other Church, doe you think it unreasonable, first to acquaint the Church with their desire? And doe you not allow of Letters of recommendation, when any is to passe to other Churches? May not els jealousies and suspicions arise, and heart-burnings between Churches? Do you not remember, what divisions and emulations there want hereof did cause among the Churches of old? And, brother, we desire to doe all things in love. And we desire *that others should doe no otherwise unto us, then we doe unto them*: as you object. You twit us againe, for *respecting the rich, more then the poore*. If it be true, it is † our fault, and ought not so to be: if not true, it is yours, and that so often as (as you doe) you cast it in our dish.

* Ioh. 6. 66.

† 1 Cor. 11. 22.

The eight Interrogatory.

This Interrogatory is to charge us, *for not admitting to Baptisme any Infants of such Parents, who are not members of our Churches*. And, brother, you make this a most heinous and intolerable thing. Why, you know, if we would admit of all, it would be no small benefit and advantage to us, especially when we are to deale with *rich* mens children, such as you say we have in such *high estimation*. Therefore that we doe it not for rich mens sake, you may thinke there is something in it, that covetousnesse is not so predominant in us, as to corrupt our *Consciences*. And therefore

brother, let some charitable thought take place in you, that we doe it rather of *Conscience*, then of *Covetousnesse*. And what say you to this, brother? We preach Christ to the Parents. We preach him no lesse a King, then a Priest and Prophet. We preach him the onely King of our Conscience, and the onely Law-giver and Governour of his Churches. We exhort them to set up this King in their hearts. Wee exhort them to become and professe to be
* Revel. 15. 3. those Saints, of whom he is King. For *he is* * *King of Saints*. But, brother, they will not beleeve us; they will not depend upon Christ, as the onely Lawgiver, and King over their consciences. Now, what would you have us to doe in this case? Baptize the Infants of such Parents, as will not, in this respect, professe, nor confesse Christ to be their King? Why, doe you not know, that no Infants have any title to Baptisme, that are not within the Covenant visibly? And how are they within the Covenant visibly, but by vertue of their Parents faith outwardly professed? And what outward profession of faith in the Parents, that refuse Christ for their onely King? that are ashamed, or afraid, to professe to be in covenant with Christ, as their King? If therefore the Parents professe not; yea refuse thus to be in visible Covenant, can the children be said to be in visible Covenant, and so to have a right to Baptisme, the externall seale of the Covenant? Brother, here is *obex*, a barre put.

Obj. If you say, *The child shall not beare the iniquitie of the father.*

Ans. True; but the Parents keep themselves off from the covenant by refusing Christ, in whom alone the beleever hath right to the Covenant; and so the child is withall kept off. For it is not now, under the Gospel, as it was from *Abraham* to Christ, The covenant was made with *Abraham* and his seed, so as by vertue hereof all the male Infants of beleeving *Abraham* were and ought to be circumcised. But now under the Gospel, those onely are accounted *Abrahams* seed, who professe the faith of *Abraham*, which faith looked upon Christ, and embraceth whole Christ in all his offices, and professe the same outwardly, *Rom.* 10. 9, 10. So as the Covenant is entayled onely to beleevers now, and so to their children (as *Act.* 2. 39.) If then the Parents by refusing Christ as their King, as the *Jewes* did (*Luk.* 19. 14.) doe hereby cut themselves off from the Covenant, they do therewith cut off

them

their children too: and this not to be recovered in the child, untill either the Parent be restored, or the child coming in time to beleeve, and to professe the faith of Christ, doe hereby claime his right to the Covenant, and so to Baptisme, as being a* childe of *Abraham*. Let this suffice for the present, why we dare not baptize the children of those Parents, that refuse to professe the faith of Christ, as their onely King, as well as their onely Priest and Prophet. For Christ divided, becomes no Christ to the divider. This is, according to the vulgar Latin translation, (1 *Joh.* 4.3.) *solvere Jesum*, to dissolve Jesus, that is, to receive him only in part, and not in whole. Which is the spirit of *Antichrist*. Besides, willing disobedience to any good order in a Church, deprives a man of the liberties of the Church: (for so he may not eat of the provender, that will not undergoe the yoake) Now this of a voluntary profession to walk with the Saints of such a place, according to Christ, is a thing so just, as following the example of the old Church, who were in particular Covenant with God. 2. In the New, they professed their giving themselves to God, 2 *Cor.* 8.5. 3. All societies require some promise of their members. If it be said, we are members of the universall Church by faith and repentance: w: reply, 1. this faith must be shewen by a voluntary giving our selves to Christ visibly, and then to some Church of his, if opportunitie serve; for Christ will not have his people to be wandring sheep, when they may have a fold; nor to be *individua vaga*, when they may be reduced to order.

*Rom. 4.11.16

The ninth Interrogatory.

This *Interrogatory* lays a charge upon *Independents*, for *refusing to admit to the Lords Supper such as are not notoriously scandalous, nor grossely ignorant, but professe repentance, &c.* which you say, *is a very uncharitable, arrogant, yea unchristian practise, contrary to Christs own example in admitting Judas to the Lords Supper*; Also to that of *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 11. you calling it also *a transcendent straine of tyrannicall usurpation over soules and consciences, and Gods Ordinances, worse then our most domineering Lordly Prelates, &c. yea Lording over Christ himselfe, and more then ever the Apostles did, but onely by their extraordinary calling, &c.*

I answer in one word (omitting your copious aggravations, and sharp censures) that we look further, then to a generall pro-

session and conversation, namely, to their faith in Christ, that it be found intire, and whole, and namely, whether they hold him to be as the onely Prophet and High Priest, so the onely Prince of his People, the onely Lord, and Lawgiver to every mans conscience, and over every Congregation or Church of his Saints. If they thus acknowledge not Christs kingly office, as well as his other offices, we doe not, we dare not receive them. And what have they to do with the scales, that refuse by covenant to own Christ for their King? As for *Judas*, he received the sop, not the supper; for, *after the sop, he went out* *immediately, saith *John*. So as it appeares, the other Evangelists relate some other passages by *hysteron proteron*, as is not unusuall in Scripture story. And none of them saith, that he received the Supper. And suppose he did: the Churches Censure had not yet past upon him: onely *John* by a secret signe knew he was to be the traytor. For that of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. that was a true Church, though now disordered; and the Apostle refers the redressing of their abuses to themselves. The case is otherwise here, so as all your accumulated calumniations fall to ground. And concerning the Apostles extraordinary calling, if we must expect the like calling, we must not in the meane time admit of any, either to Baptisme, or to the Lords Supper; neither should there be any gathering of Churches at all; as some from hence doe gather. Besides, what shall the authority be, that *Luther* gathered the Churches by, and those that followed him? and what lawfull gathering then have the Reformed Churches?

* John 13.30.

For your marginall note of *Moses, David, Solomon, about setling Religion by Gods own direction*: herein you come home to that I said before, alledged against your unlimited law. But in that you now restraine by their example, all *Church-government to the Civil Magistrate*; you must make it out by holding close to the rule, that is, *To settle Religion by Gods own direction*, as you here confesse, and *not to elect, erect a forme of Religion, and Church-government, such as they shall conceive suitable, &c.* as before you told us. And *Moses, David, Solomon*, were all types of Christ, who put an end to all such. And while you there exclude the Priests from having any thing to doe in *Reforming, or advising*: What will the *Assembly* say to you? But they may advise, you will say. But the Priests

might do nothing, but according to Gods prescript law; no more then *Moses, David, Solomon*. And if the *Priests* (as you say) *had no ruling votes*: then by this reckoning, what *votes* do you allow the *Assembly*-men, in their mixt Committees with the members of Parliament, or in the *Assembly* it selfe? Reconcile these I pray you.

The tenth Interrogatory.

This *Interrogatory* questions, or rather (as all the rest) concludes, that that Text (*Mat.* 18. 15, 16, 17.) is not meant of any Ecclesiasticall censure, as of Excommunication, but onely of the civill Court of Justice. Brother, if you did speake here as a Divine, and not meerly as a Lawyer, you would not have, against the judgment of most learned Divines, ancient and modern, and not Papists, &c. so interpreted this place. And what speak I of Divines? The Text it selfe is its own clearest Interpreter. For it is immediatly added (v. 18.) *Verily I say unto you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall bee loosed in heaven.* Which is without controversie spoken of Church-censure, or of the *power of the Keyes* in exercising Church-discipline; as that (*Matth.* 16. 19.) is spoken of doctrine, as the learned *Calvin* well observeth. So as this very context cleareth the former to bee meant of *Church-censure*, as it was among the Jewes. You alledge on the contrary, that learned Lawyer whom wee all honour for his learning. Good brother, I could wish that all this zeale of yours against Independents, might not arise from any jealousie, as if Church-censures should prejudicate or trench upon your pleadings at the Barre of civill justice. Farre be it, that we should have our motion beyond our own Spheare. Content your self with your own Orb, and we shall confine our selves to ours, I dare warrant you. Again, to what purpose do you urge this interpretation of this Text against us? Do not all the Presbyterians expound it so? And if this Text, which is made the great pillar of Presbyterian excommunication, be taken off, you leave no more to a Classis then we, *scil.* to consult and advise. And with this foot you have dashed all the milk you gave them.

The writings of *Beza* and *Erastus* one against the other, are extant.

The eleventh Interrogatory.

This *Interrogatory* is to perswade us, that in that *Assembly*, or *Evangelicall Synod* (as you call it) Acts 15. *the Apostles voted not as*

they

they were Apostles infallibly guided by the holy Ghost, but rather as they were in their ordinary capacitie, as Elders and chiefe members of it. Whereupon (producing your six reasons for it) you peremptorily conclude, that *this is an undeniable Scripture-authority for the lawfulnesse, use of Parliaments, Councels, Synods, under the Gospel, upon all like necessary occasions; and for their power to determine controversies of Religion, to make Canons in things necessary for the Churches peace and conformment, maugre all evasions, exceptions (of Independents) to elude it.*

But let us examine your *six reasons*, why the Apostles sate not as *Apostles*, but as *ordinary Elders*, &c. Where first, we lay this ground for the contrary, *scil.* that they sate as Apostles, because not ordinary Elders, as Elders, can say, *It seemed good to the holy Ghost and to us.* But the Apostles, as Apostles, might say so, because in any doctrinall point they had the promise of the Spirit, to bee *led into all truth*, as upon whom the Church was to bee built, *Eph.* 2. 20. Secondly, if they sate as ordinary Elders, then their decrees did no further bind, then as they might appeare to agree with Scripture; otherwise Elders, as Elders, may bind the conscience, let the decree bee never so wicked. But to your reasons:

First, *For else* (say you) *Paul and Barnabas being Apostles themselves, might have decided that controversie at Antioch, without sending to Jerusalem. Answ.* 1. By your favour, brother, *Barnabas* was not (to speak properly) an *Apostle*, though an *Apostolicall man.* 2. They argued with those Legalists at Antioch, sufficiently to convince them; but they comming from Judea, and pretending the use of circumcision, and *Moses* Law, to be still in force in the Church at Jerusalem, and the controversie being between two great parties, the Christian Jews, and Christian Gentiles; hereupon the *Church at Antioch* thought it requisite, for the fuller satisfaction to all parties, to send *Paul* and *Barnabas* to the *Apostles and Elders* at Jerusalem. And 3. because *Paul and Barnabas* are thus sent, doth it follow, that they were not sufficient (yea *Paul* alone, as an Apostle infallibly guided by the holy Ghost) to have decided the question at Antioch? As no doubt sufficiently they did, though not so satisfactorily to all. And 4. that they are thus by the Church at Antioch sent to

the Apoſtles and Church at Jeruſalem: here is a good example for the uſe of communion of Churches, as in doubtfull caſes to conſult one with another.

2. *Elſe* (ſay you) *the Church at Antioch would have ſent to none, to reſolve their doubts, but to the Apoſtles onely, and not to the Elders.*

Ianſwer: In that they ſent to the Elders alſo, it ſhewes the reſpect that one Church ſhould have to another. 2. Thoſe Elders were men endowed with the gifts of the holy Ghoſt. 3. Though they had not infallibility, as the Apoſtles had, yet their aſſent to the determination, was a witneſſe-bearing to the truth thereof.

3. *Elſe* (ſay you) *Paul and Barnabas would have put the queſtion to the Apoſtles onely, not to the Elders and Church, as well as to them*, verſ. 4, 5, 6.

This is anſwered in the former.

4. *Elſe the Apoſtles would not have called all the Elders and brethren to conſult*, v. 6. *when themſelves might have done it alone.*

Ianſwer: 1. Though the Apoſtles might have done it alone, yet they would not, but called together the Elders and Brethren, yea, and the whole Church at Jeruſalem (verſ. 4, 22.) hereby to give a precedent to all Presbyters, or *Elders of Churches*, that in caſes of difference ariſing, they call the whole *Church* together, for aſſiſtance and counſell therein. 2. In ſo doing, the Apoſtles diminiſhed nothing of that Judicial power and authority which Chriſt left with them for deciding of controverſies, being infallibly guided by the holy Ghoſt, while they thought it not fit to do ſuch things in a corner, which concerned the whole Church.

5. *Peter and James* (ſay you) *would not have argued the caſe ſo largely, and proved it by Arguments and Scriptures, as they did, one after another, but have peremptorily reſolved it without diſpute, had they ſate and determined it by their extraordinary infallible power.*

Ianſwer: This followes no more then the former. For the Arguments they uſed, with the concluſion, were by the direction of the holy Ghoſt. And 2. The holy Ghoſt is not ſo peremptory, but will have his truths examined by the Scriptures, as *Acts* 17, 11. The *Bereans* are commended by the holy Ghoſt for examining *Paul's* Sermon by the Scripture, though hee were an Apoſtle, and ſpake by the holy Ghoſt. And 3. the Churches aſſent was taken in form witneſſe-*wiſe* [illegible]

6. *The finall resolution* (say you) *Letters and Canons of this Synod, had run onely in the Apostles names, had they proceeded onely by their Apostolicall infallible authority, and not in the names of the Elders and brethren too.*

I answer: There is as little reason in this, as in all the rest of your reasons: for then by this reason sundry of *Pauls* Epistles, which were all dictated by the holy Ghost, did not proceed from that infallibility of Spirit alone wherewith the Apostle was guided, because we find others, not Apostles, joyned with him. As (1 *Cor.* 1. 1.) *Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ, and Sosthenes a brother, to the Church of God &c.* And 2 *Cor.* 1. 1. *Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ, and Timothy a brother, to the Church, &c.* And *Gal.* 1. 1. *Paul an Apostle, &c. and all the brethren that are with me, to the Churches of Galatia, &c.* So *Phil.* 1. 1. *Col.* 1. 1. 1 *Thess.* 1. 1. *Paul, and Sylvanus, and Timotheus, to the Church, &c.* In all which places, though there was but one Apostle, guided with infallibility of the holy Ghost to write the Scriptures, yet many brethren are joyned in the salutation of the Churches; and yet *Paul*, as Apostle, did write those Epistles, and not simply as a brother, or fellow-servant with them of Jesus Christ. Neither are those brethren (so named) accounted the Pen-men of the Scripture, as *Paul* of right is. Thus you see, brother, there was no necessity, that either the Apostles names should be put alone, because they only were guided by the Spirits infallibility: or that the names of the *Elders and Brethren* should not be put, without a necessary conclusion deduced thence, that *the Decree there was* therefore *binding*, as being the *Decree of a Synod, and so exemplary for all Parliaments, Councels, Synods, to make the like binding Decrees.*

But (good brother) for all your punctuall quotations of that Scripture, you doe not all this while tell us (which is the main of all) that which we find in the 28. verse of that chapter, IT SEEMED GOOD TO THE HOLY GHOST AND VS, TO LAY VPON YOU NO GREATER BVRTHEN, THEN THESE NECESSARY THINGS. Now, brother, we chalenge you to shew us any *Parliament, Councell, Synod*, ever since the *Apostles*, that could or can say thus, IT SEEMED GOOD TO THE HOLY GHOST AND VS, *to determine controversies of religion, &c.*

make and impose Canons to bind all men, &c. Shew this to us, at this time, and we will obey. But if you cannot, as you never can, never let any man presse upon us that *Scripture*, that *Synod*, which hath no parallel in the whole world, and so is no precedent, pattern, for any *Councell, Synod, Parliaments.*

Let me conclude with a passage of the learned and famous *Chamierus*, that grand Antagonist of *Bellarmins*. *Bellarmine* upon the same Scripture you alledge (*Act.* 15.) (as also our late Prelates have usually done) would deduce the same conclusion, that you doe, for humane authority in binding mens consciences. To which *Chamierus* thus answereth: that this *consequence holds not: Quia non eadem sit authoritas Apostolorum, & reliquorum Ecclesiæ Pastorum*: *Because there is not the same authoritie of the Apostles, and of other Pastors of the Church. For with those the Holy Ghost was extraordinarily present: so as what they propounded, did simply proceed of God. But other Pastors have no such extraordinary assistance of the Spirit: and therefore their Decrees are not to be paralleld with the Apostles Decrees. Which is a speciall difference in binding of the conscience, which hath it selfe for witnesse, and God for the onely Judge: therefore, when it hath any thing commanded of God, it must needs stand bound.* Where (*inter cætera*) is to be noted, That *God is the onely Judge* and binder of the Conscience. The great question in controverse at this day.

Panstratiæ Catholicæ. Tom. 3. De libertate Christiana. lib. 15. c. 10. De prohibitis Idolothytis, sanguine, & suffocato. Illis aderat extra ordiné spiritus sanctus: adeo ut quæ illi proponerét, a Deo simpliciter manarét. At reliquis Pastoribus adsistentia spiritus nulla extra ordinem: itaq; ne eorú quidé sanctiones eodem loco habitæ cú Apostolorum sanctionib⁹. Præcipiautẽ discrimẽ in obligatione Conscientiæ, quæ se testem habet, Deú solum Judicem: ideo ú habet aliquid imperatum a Deo non potest obstringi.

Obj. But you will here object, That although (as before you say of Priests) a *Councel*, or *Synod*, have not this authority to make and impose binding decrees, yet a Parliament hath; and you deduce it from this Synod, *Act.* 15.

Answ. Now truly, brother, by your favour, this doth no way hold proportion, that that which you call a Synod (as a patterne for binding Decrees) should not qualifie a Synod of Divines with the like power, and yet transmit it over to a Parliament for binding authority over the consciences of a whole Nation: surely that Apostolike Assembly, or Church-meeting, was neither a Parliament, nor Diet, nor Senate, nor any such thing, that you should build any such power of Parliaments upon it, for the making of binding Decrees over the consciences of men. Therefore, good brother, be not so peremptory, but take in your top-sail, too high to bear up against so stiffe a gale, both of Scripture and Reason. But I come to your twelfth and last Interrogatory.

The twelfth Interrogatory.

This *Interrogatory* is concerning the *lawfull coercive power of Civil Magistrates in suppressing Heresies, &c.* Or, *setters up of new forms of Ecclesiasticall Government, &c.*

For answer hereunto, Wee do acknowledge and submit unto the lawfull coercive power of civill Magistrates, according to the Scripture, *Rom.* 13. But brother, however, you must distinguish between mens consciences and their practices. The conscience simply considered in it self, is for God, the Lord of the conscience, alone to judge, as before. But for a mans practices, (of which alone, man can take cognizance of) if they be against any of Gods Commandments of the first, or second Table; that appertains to the civill Magistrate to punish, who is for this cause called, *Custos utriusq; Tabulæ. The keeper of both Tables:* and therefore the Apostle saith, (*Rom.* 13. 3, 4.) *For Rulers are not a terror to good WORKS, but to the evill. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? DO that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for hee is the Minister of God to thee for good; but if thou DO that which is evill, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain; for hee is the Minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that DOTH evill.* So as we see here, what is the object of Civill power, to wit; *actions, good,* or *bad.* Not bare opinions, not thoughts, not conscience, but *actions.* And your self *exempts the preaching of the Gospel and truth of God, from being restrained by the civill Magistrate.* But now brother, the time hath been, and somewhere is, and will be, that the * *truth of God* hath been *with-holden in unrighteousnesse,* and by the civill Magistrate punished with death, being condemned for heresie. And you see in these dayes, great diversities of mens opinions and judgements: one judging thus, another so; you think my way erroneous, and I may do as much for you. But do you or I, *DO* that which is evill, in actually breaking of any of Gods commandments, or any just lawes of the land? then we lie open to course of civill justice; but so long as wee differ only in opinion, which of us shall be punished first? or which of us is in the error? you write books, I write against them; yet *sub judice lis est,* who shall be Judge? you? or I? surely neither. Among other things, you would have *the civill Magistrate to suppresse, restrain, imprison, confine,*

* 2 Thes. 2.

confine, baniſh the ſetters up of new forms of Eccleſiaſticall government without lawfull authority. It may be you will involve me in the number. But what if I prove that which you call *a new form*, to be the *old form*: and the lawfull authority of ſetting it up, to be of Chriſt? Muſt I therefore undergo all theſe your terrible cenſures, becauſe you ſo judge? What if your judgement herein be altogether erroneous? What puniſhment then is due to him that condemnes the innocent? you may be a civill Judge one day; remember then, brother, that if I come before you, you meddle not with my conſcience, nor with mee for it. If I ſhall offend any of your juſt lawes, puniſh mee and ſpare not. But if you ſhould make a law like to that of the *Jewes*, that who ſo ſhall confeſſe Chriſt to be the Son of God, and the only Lawgiver, Lord, King, Governour over Conſciences, Churches, and not man, not Aſſemblies, not Councels, or Senates, though *after much Faſting, Prayers, Diſputes*, (as you ſay) I confeſſe, I ſhall be apt to tranſgreſſe that law; but yet take you heed how you puniſh me for that trangreſſion, with an *Enſe recidendum*, or I wot not what club-law. So ends your Book, and ſo my Anſwer.

Now brother, you have ſince publiſhed a third Book, partly in anſwer to your firſt Anſwerer, and partly touching Mr *Joh. Goodwin*; I leave the parties intereſſed to acquit themſelves; Only your ſtating the Queſtion in the concluſion of the Book, I could not omit. You ſtate it thus: *Whether a whole repreſentative Church and State, hath not as great, or greater Eccleſiaſticall Juriſdiction over the whole Realm & Churches, with all the members, then any one Independent Miniſter or Congregation challenge over their members.* Brother, I anſwer, if you can prove your Juriſdiction good, we will eaſily grant it to be greater. But if the Juriſdiction of the Churches you call *Independent* be good, as having Chriſt for the founder and owner of it, as we have cleerly proved, then certainly, it will prove the greater: For, *magna eſt veritas, & prævalet:* for Chriſts kingdome ſhall ſtand up, when all oppoſite earthly kingdomes, like earthen veſſels, ſhall with his iron rod be daſhed in pieces: This for the Clauſe.

Another paſſage in the ſame Book, is touching my perſon: where you ſay, *That none of us three-brethren-Sufferers, ſuffered for oppoſing Biſhops legall authority, or any Ceremonies by act of Parliament eſtabliſhed*: Here brother, give me leave to anſwer for my ſelf:

First,

First, for all manner of *Ceremonies of humane ordinance*, imposed upon the conscience in the worship of God, I openly, for the space almost of a twelvemoneth, immediately before my troubles, preached against them, every Lords day, out of *Col.* 2. from the 8th verse to the end of the Chapter; so as when I was summoned into the High Commission Court, the Articles read against mee, were not only for my two Sermons, *Nov.* 5th, but also for those other Sermons against the *Ceremonies*: so as this might challenge to be one ingredient in my censure in *Star-Chamber*, and no lesse then a pillory matter.

And concerning my opposing of Bishops themselves, not only their extravagancies (for which I also was censured, and suffered) you may remember one passage in that Book, *For God & the King*, affixed to the *information*; *Were there a law in* England, *as once among the* Locrians, *that who should come to propound a new law, he should com. with a rope about his neck*; I *would be the first my self, to petition the Parliament, that the government of Bishops might be abolished, and another set up more agreeable to the Scripture*, (although I confesse, were I to make such a proposition now, I should as much alter my style, as the condition of this present time differs from that, I should mount much higher.) And do you not think, brother, that this helped to put the Hang-mans knife (though not the halter) so close to the very root of mine ears, that it opened the wider sluces for the blood to stream out (with yours my dear Fellow-sufferers) to fill the Whores cup, and make her drunk and spue, and fall, and rise up no more? Although the more cautelous and self-wise, or discreet any of us (but especially my self) then was, to avoid the fear of men, or force of law, certainly now, brother, it abates so much the more of the honour of that suffering; and the lesse honour, the more *shame*. But take we the shame to our selves, and give we all the honour to whom it is due; and brother, wherein we then came short, let us now make it up, by being zealous for our Christ, in labouring to advance the throne of his kingly government in all our souls, and over all the Churches of the Saints, and with those four and twenty Elders, cast our selves and crowns before him that sitteth on the throne, saying, Rev. 4. 10. *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for evermore. Amen.* And let this be our main contention, who shall most honor Christ, and most love one another, *Farewell.*

FINIS.

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